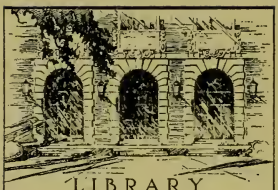

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ARTLESS TALES.

VOL. III.

Strahan and Preston,
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ARTLESS TALES:

BY

MRS. IVES HURRY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

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ARTLESS TALES.

THE BASTILE.

MRS. CARTER was a widow of ſmall fortune, who reſided on the weſtern coaſt of Scotland. The houſe ſhe inhabited was large, and had once been magnificent; but the decay into which the ancient family to whom it belonged had gradually ſunk, was viſible in every part of the building. The huſband of Mrs. Carter was the laſt male heir; he had fallen in the ſervice of his country, bequeathing to his lady only the family manſion, and a ſmall annuity.

It was towards the latter end of January, as ſhe was one night retiring to reſt, that

ſhe was alarmed by the ſound of voices very near the houſe; this was unuſual—as from the lonelineſs of the ſituation, few people paſſed it even in the day. The ſervants who compoſed her houſehold, and who were females, haſtened to her in greater trepidation than herſelf. Various conjectures were formed as to the cauſe of the diſturbance, when a loud knocking at the door ſtill more alarmed them.

It was in vain that Mrs. Carter deſired firſt one, then another, to enquire what theſe intruders wanted. Fear overcame every feeling of reſpect, and crouched behind each other, they ſtood trembling, whilſt their miſtreſs opened a caſement, and enquired, "who was there?"

A voice immediately replied, apologiſing for the diſturbance which was cauſed, that they were ſailors, who, in endeavouring to reach the ſhore, had loſt their way, and from the darkneſs of the night, and the increaſing tempeſt, it would be impoſſible for them to find it.

Mrs.

Mrs. Carter did not immediately reply—the night was indeed diſmal—the wind howled—the rain fell in torrents; and to refuſe a ſhelter, which ſhe had it in her power to beſtow, was not conſonant to her feelings. Yet ſome lurking fears ſtill hung upon her mind, not of common robbers, for they were little known, but of thoſe marauders who infeſted the Scottiſh coaſt, in order to trepan the inhabitants to America. Her ſervants were few, and of a ſex that they could be little protection to her.

Whilſt ſhe heſitated, the ſtranger ſpoke again, and repeated his ſolicitation. She could no longer refuſe a ſhelter, but going down ſtairs, followed by the terrified domeſtics, who, though they dared not precede, neither dared they ſtay behind her—the door was opened, and the party entered.

It conſiſted of four perſons; the one who had ſpoken, was dreſſed in a naval uniform; the other three were ſailors—theſe repaired

to the kitchen, whilſt the officer attended Mrs. Carter to the parlour.

He was a man apparently about forty; of a pleaſing countenance, and prepoſſeſſing manners. He again apologiſed for his intruſion; ſaid he was commander of a frigate which had been ſome months upon that ſtation, and having been on ſhore, he was overtaken by night before he was aware; and whether the boat was drifted, or they had really loſt their way, he could not tell, but they were unable to find her. He begged he might not keep Mrs. Carter up, as he could ſleep as well on the carpet as in a bed.

Mrs. Carter, however, who now ſaw how groundleſs were her fears, ordered ſupper, and as the increaſing tempeſt took from her all wiſh of going to reſt, ſhe was not ſorry to have thus unexpectedly found a companion.

The ſtranger, who ſaw her fears, ſaid, "how little would you regard ſuch a ſtorm as this, had you been witneſs to the dreadful

dreadful convulſions of nature I have ſeen in different parts of the world."

"You have travelled a great deal, then, Sir?"

"Yes, Madam, there are few habitable parts of the globe I have not viſited. I firſt became a wanderer from inclination—ſince, becauſe I have a young family, who look to me for ſupport."

Mrs. Carter regarded him with an eye of enquiring curioſity, and he added, "if I did not fear intruding upon your time, I would inform you of the particulars of my life; which, though perhaps not very remarkable, may beguile a few hours, till the ſtorm without permits you to reſt."

Mrs. Carter ſaid, ſhe ſhould be happy to be informed of what he wiſhed to diſcloſe, and as ſoon as ſupper was ended, he began as follows.

"I was intended by my father, who is a dignitary of the church, for an eccleſiaſtical life, but as ſoon as I was old enough to have a choice, my inclinations led me to

very different purſuits; and ſo ſtrong was my attachment to the life of a ſailor, that at the age of ſixteen, I entered the navy. Here, my eagerneſs for ſeeing different countries, and the manners of other nations, was amply gratified; and few young men, for ſome years, led a happier life. Among other deſtinations, we ſailed from England to Quebec, to convey an officer of diſtinction, who was going to take the command of the army, at that time ſtationed in North America.

Whilſt we lay in the river St. Lawrence, detained by contrary winds, two of my companions and myſelf, determined to explore ſome parts of the adjoining country. For this purpoſe, we obtained leave of abſence. We had paſſed the moſt inhabited ſpots, and were come to a part, which, though rich in native luxuriance. ſeemed deſerted by the human race. We were obſerving with regret the effects of war and uſurpation, when, ſuddenly emerging from a thick wood, we were ſurpriſed by the ſight of a ſmall building, conſtructed

in

in the European ſtyle, and with a degree of elegance not to be expected in ſo remote a ſituation. We approached and ſurveyed it attentively, but ſaw no appearance of a human being. The ſingularity of the circumſtance awakened our curioſity, and as it was ſome time ſince we had taken any refreſhment, we determined to apply for permiſſion to reſt ourſelves. We knocked at the door ſome time, and at laſt an old woman aſked us in tolerable Engliſh, "what we wanted?"

We told her we were weary and hungry;—ſhe ſhook her head; ſaid, "the woods were full of fruit, and we could ſit down on the graſs," and then cloſing the door diſappeared.

Aſtoniſhed at this conduct, ſo oppoſite to the native hoſpitality of the Americans, we ſtood ſome time in mute ſurprize—unwilling to leave the ſpot, yet without a reaſonable pretext for remaining in it. We were preparing to return, when a man, apparently an European, paſſed us; and

ſurveying us very attentively, entered the houſe.

There was nothing in his countenance which tempted us to addreſs him; and we threfore continued our route, without further interruption.

Delighted as we were with the grandeur of the ſcenery, the beautifully tremendous cataracts, the ſmiling iſlands, ſpringing up in the middle of St. Lawrence, we could not but lament that the unoffending natives ſhould have been driven from ſcenes, to which they had a preſcriptive right, to make way for the ſword of contention, and the uſurped authority of diſtant nations.

As we returned nearly the ſame way, we neceſſarily paſſed the cottage which had before attracted our curioſity. Through the neat garden paling we beheld a young perſon ſupporting the branches of a fruit tree, which was borne down by its own luxuriance. She was ſimply dreſſed, but of exquiſite beauty. Yet there was in her countenance, though blooming with youth and

and health, an expreſſion of deep melancholy. As ſhe purſued her occupation, ſhe ſung a plaintive French air, with the moſt exquiſite pathos, and was ſo intent on her employment, that ſhe did not perceive us. As ſoon as ſhe had finiſhed ſhe returned to the houſe, and we ſaw her no more.

As the time we had procured for our excurſion was nearly expired, we were obliged to return to the ſhip, and in our way made enquiries concerning the inhabitants of the cottage. We was told, a gentleman from France, and his daughter reſided there, but as they mixed with no ſociety, and ſeldom quitted their own premiſes, they were very little known.

This account ſatisfied the curioſity of my companions, but it did not mine; and being ſtill detained, I determined to make another effort for information, and about a week after went on ſhore. I directed my ſteps towards the cottage, but what was my ſurprize to find it ſhut up, and forſaken by its inhabitants? I made many

enquiries, but with little effect. It was ſuſpected the ſtranger was a French nobleman who had fled from his country to eſcape perſecution; but not finding that ſecurity in the neighbourhood of Quebec he had expected, was again become a wanderer.

Thus diſappointed I gave up farther reſearches, and ceaſed to think of perſons whoſe preſervation ſeemed to depend on their being unknown. We ſoon after ſet ſail for England, in company with a packet which had, like us, been waiting for a fair wind. Our voyage was proſperous, and we ſoon arrived at Falmouth.

As it was more than three years ſince I had ſeen my family, I obtained permiſſion to ſpend a few weeks at home, and haſtened into Glamorganſhire, where my father reſided.

Every one was rejoiced to ſee me, and teſtified their regard in the warmeſt manner; parties of pleaſure were formed to amuſe me, and every day was productive of ſome new delight.

In one of our excurſions on the water, we paſſed an old building called the hermitage, which belonged to my father, and had been the ſcene of many of my ſports whilſt a boy.—Its appearance was much altered, it had recently been repaired—I enquired of my ſiſter the cauſe. She ſaid it was inhabited by a gentleman, with whom her father had formerly been very intimate, but who now wiſhed to remain in total ſecluſion. He had a daughter, of whom, though ſhe had not ſeen much, ſhe had formed a very flattering opinion;" and added, " if I liked, ſhe would take ſome opportunity of introducing me." I readily agreed to the propoſal, and the next morning we ſet off for the hermitage.

As we paſſed a copſe which led to the houſe, I obſerved two perſons, whom my ſiſter ſaid were Monſieur le Miniſtre and his daughter.

We quickened our pace, and ſoon overtook them.—Judge my aſtoniſhment when in them I beheld our Canadian fugitives. My ſurprize and confuſion was ſo great,

that I could ſcarcely pay my compliments, till recollecting how ſtrange my conduct muſt appear, I in ſome meaſure recovered from my confuſion. We did not ſtay long; and my ſiſter, as we returned, enquired what was the matter with me on firſt ſeeing the ſtrangers.

I immediately related all which had paſſed in America—when I had finiſhed, ſhe ſmiled and ſaid, "If I could rely upon your diſcretion during the life of one of the parties, I would explain all which appears ſo extraordinary," I aſſured her ſhe might, and ſhe gave me as nearly as I can recollect the following particulars. "The gentleman who has cauſed you ſo much ſurprize, and awakened ſo much intereſt is a French nobleman of the higheſt rank, who, under his preſent ſimple appellations conceals that of the Marquis de la Salle. He was born to the poſſeſſion of large eſtates, and long boaſted honours; and being the laſt of his race, was cheriſhed with the moſt indiſcriminating fondneſs. He had naturally a ſtrong underſtanding and

and an excellent heart; but his paſſions were vehement, and he was never taught to bend them to any controul. Early accuſtomed to adulation, he ſoon learned to conſider the world as formed only for ſuch beings as himſelf, and that the greater part of mankind, whom he termed the canaille, were to be ſubſervient, or to contribute, to his wiſhes. His parents died when he was about eight years old, and the guardians to whoſe care he was committed, thought they fulfilled their duty in taking care of his fortune, and procuring for him the moſt reputed maſters—to chance or nature they left the formation of his character. But alas! the marquis was not of a diſpoſition to bear, uncontaminated, the full liberty which was allowed him. His paſſions required the curb of prudence, and the ſtrict reins of parental authority.

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follow a long illneſs, for ſome time remained, and opened his mind to conviction and regret. My father availed himſelf of theſe happy diſpoſitions to awaken that contrition, which ſhould ſecure him from future errors. He repreſented the certain, though ſometimes ſlow, conſequences of vice,—the degradation to which it leads,—the miſery which inevitably follows it.

" The marquis was then ſuffering from the effects of his vices, and he attempted not to juſtify his conduct—he gave my father reaſon to ſuppoſe that the rank and riches, which had hitherto been ſubſervient to the worſt purpoſes, would be employed in the cauſe of virtue. But alas! in this he was fatally deceived. The power and vigour of returning health gathered round the marquis his old aſſociates; habit was more powerful than determinations of reform made on a bed of ſickneſs. He again yielded to the temptations of vice, and again became its profeſſed votary.

My father, who too ſoon learnt the diſappoint-

appointment of his hopes, was ſhocked at depravity ſo incorrigible; and, regretting the uſeleſs pains he had taken, reſolved to drop all intimacy where he could no longer feel eſteem. The marquis was, at firſt, ſeverely wounded by this conduct; but in a little time even this regret was forgotten amidſt daily extravagance, and nightly revels.

" He was one evening engaged with a large party, when in the midſt of their carouſals the ſubject of diſcourſe turned upon politicks; and the marquis, inflamed with wine, uttered ſome bold inſinuations againſt the governing powers of France, which at that period were not ſuffered to paſs with impunity. This was warmly reſented by one of the party, and a formal challenge paſſed. The opponents met the next day at ſome diſtance from the capital, The marquis fired firſt—his adverſary fell —the ball had penetrated his right ſide;— but though his wound was ſevere, it was not immediately mortal, and he was conveyed to the neareſt village, whither the marquis

marquis followed. As the nobleman he had wounded was one to whom he was ſincerely attached, the bittereſt reproaches were added to the anguiſh with which he beheld the ſufferings he had inflicted. He determined to make all the atonement now in his power, by devoting himſelf wholly to the attendance of his friend.—This reſolution was, however, rendered abortive by the arrival of the King's guards, who, producing a lettre de cachet, conveyed him inſtantly to the Baſtile.

The aſtoniſhment into which this arreſt threw him, left him at firſt but little power of reflection. When, however, in the ſolitude of his dungeon that moment arrived, terrible, indeed, were its effects!

Hitherto unchecked by any authority, unreſtrained by any conſideration, his life had been one continued ſeries of ſelf-indulgence, and unbounded pleaſure. From his earlieſt infancy to the preſent period, he had known no controul; thoſe about him were either the vaſſals of his power, or the companions of his riot. One friend alone

alone had he found generous and diſintereſted enough to be ſincere; fearleſs of loſing his favour, diſclaiming to flatter his pride; but that friend his vices had driven from him, and irritated to a raſh vow of ſeeing him no more.

Now ſhut out from ſociety, from the chearing light of day—doomed to captivity, to ſuffering, perhaps to death,—what a reverſe!

In the firſt moments of deſpair, his reaſon ſeemed to have forſaken him;—he traverſed his dungeon with frantic fury, attempted to force open the door, and imprecated the bittereſt maledictions on thoſe who had confined him. Every wild paſſion of his ſoul was inflamed, and he vowed the bittereſt vengeance againſt his perſecutors.

At this moment one of the attendants entered—the faint glimmer of the lamp which he carried diſcovered him to the Marquis—he inſtantly recognized him as one who had dared execute upon him the orders of

of deſpotic power. The firſt feeling of his ſoul was revenge—he ſprung forward —ſeized the man with a fury almoſt demoniac, and daſhed him againſt the wall with a force he was unable to reſiſt. He uttered a piercing ſhriek, and fell to the ground covered with blood.

The noiſe inſtantly brought people to the dungeon. The Marquis, pale with horror and fury, ſtood gaſping for breath—his victim breathed no more!

The tale wanted no narrator.

The murderer was loaded with chains, and thrown into a dungeon more loathſome than that he had quitted.

He had not ſpoken ſince the dreadful cataſtrophe; almoſt unconſcious of his exiſtence, his eyes rolled in their ſockets, his breath was convulſed, his whole frame trembled. He would have thrown himſelf on the ground, but his chains prevented him, and their loud clanking, which ran in echoes on his ear, ſeemed to encreaſe his agony.

He

He felt their reſiſtance, and his rage returned—" was it impoſſible to diſengage himſelf from them? Was a man of the firſt rank in France to be treated like a vile ſlave?" He looked impatiently around for ſome means of releaſe, but ſaw none. He claſped his hands in mute phrenzy, and after a long pauſe, burſt into a convulſive agony of tears. This was the firſt ſymptom of returning reaſon—his paſſions as violent in repentance, as impetuous in guilt, now pointed to him all the enormity of his conduct. He was an aſſaſſin—a murderer—a monſter from whom every one ſhrunk—and whom every better mind muſt wiſh arraigned for his crimes. His conſcience once awakened, ſlumbered no more. He had now no licentious companions to induce him to drown in riot every return to virtue—no ready paraſites who, whilſt they flattered his vices, undermined his principles. He was left to himſelf—to bitter repentance—to unſolaced remorſe.

This

This phrenzy of grief continued ſome time, and was then ſucceeded by all the horrors of deſpair. He remained in one poſture—his eyes fixed on the earth. The keeper, attended by a guard, entered his dungeon, and placed before him a ſcanty portion of bread and water. He touched neither—but remained the whole of that night, and the greater part of the following day, transfixed in one ſpot.

Again had the melancholy door turned on its hinges, unperceived by him; the keeper regarded him with too much fear to ſpeak.

At length he was aroufed by the hollow tolling of a bell—his ear caught the ſound—he ſtarted with awakened horror.

" 'Tis the knell of him I murdered," cried he.

As he ſaid this, he turned his eyes to the door, when he heard the ſound of approaching footſteps; the ruſty bars were undrawn, and a man entered attended by ſeveral guards.

It

It was the governor.

He took a light, and desired the soldiers to wait without.

"My Lord," said he, addressing the Marquis, "I bring orders for your immediate execution. Your treasonable expressions first brought you here—the murder of the poor wretch, who is but now interred, signs your doom. The orders for your punishment are rigorous and dreadful—the instruments of torture are preparing. At the hazard of giving mortal offence, I will, however, step between justice and your fate. I defer your execution till tomorrow morning—a mind such as yours is not prepared for eternity. Employ well the few hours which are yet allowed you, and repent whilst the means are in your power."

The Marquis almost stupified by what he heard, looked up in sullen despair.

The governor continued, "I knew your parents; to this you owe my indulgence. They deserved alas! a better son." Having said

ſaid this, he looked mournfully at the priſoner, and withdrew.

The latter followed him with his eyes to the door, and when he was gone exclaimed: "This then is the end of my career, torture, ignominy, and death—for this I was born to titles and rank—for this I inherited honour and greatneſs—for this every ſource of pleaſure has been open to me,—and for this my power and my will have been undiſputed;—but, is there no means of eſcape? Is my doom inevitable?—Oh! it is—it muſt be," cried he in a tone of deſpair; "in theſe cells mercy never entered—even pity flies the enſanguined walls."

He traverſed his dungeon as far as his chains would permit—images, the moſt horrible, took poſſeſſion of his mind;—"to torture and death!" cried he, "am I doomed to torture?"

As he dwelt on this idea, every agony encreaſed—a death-like chillneſs ſtole over—his eyes grew dim—he breathed with difficulty,

ficulty, and after a few minutes ſunk lifeleſs on the floor.

Hitherto, in a life marked by the higheſt temporal bleſſings, he had been a ſtranger to every circumſtance which calls for mental exertion. His pampered appetites, his enervated frame, had been the care of numerous vaſſals, who were taught neither to think nor act, but with a view to his pleaſure and accommodation. His parents, during their lives, were the ſlaves of his will, and the whole buſineſs of their time was to gratify and amuſe him. Hence, alas! the ſource of all his calamities.

Thrown by his guilty paſſions into a ſituation which called for fortitude, and a mind which could contemplate bodily ſuffering unappalled, his weak imagination, terrified by the image of pain and death, ſhrunk in terror from the ſcenes which awaited him.

He continued for ſome time in a ſtate of inſenſibility—long faſting aided the agonies of his mind, and ſeemed threatening to rob the executioner of his office. When

he opened his eyes, he ſaw on a little table which he had not before obſerved, a dim burning lamp, a crucifix, a ſkull, and a book. He aroſe and crawled towards them. He opened the book, and ſaw it contained prayers for condemned criminals. He knelt down, and with a devotion he had ſeldom cheriſhed, prayed for the pardon of thoſe offences, ſo great and manifold! He continued ſome time thus employed, and when he aroſe found his mind much calmed, his terrors conſiderably abated. Convinced his ſentence was juſt, he viewed his paſt life, reflected on the means of imparting happineſs he had poſſeſſed, and how ill he had employed them. Every ſocial, every religious, duty he had neglected—ſelfiſh pleaſures had occupied his whole time—no one bleſſed his name for benefits received, or prayed for his happineſs as the rewarder of virtue. His tenants had been oppreſſed to encreaſe his revenues,—his ſervants, tutored by his example, had been the diſciples of vice.

"And is there mercy for ſuch a wretch

as I am?" cried he. "Will a being of unſpotted purity compaſſionate ſuch a monſter? Ought I not to dread the puniſhment of my crimes in another world, and that the hand of retribution, which here ſtrikes, will not there be withdrawn?"

Theſe thoughts paſſed heavily over his mind. He had been told the next morning was to be that of his execution. He knew not the hours—night and day were alike to him, but he fancied the eventful moment muſt be near. He endeavoured to arm himſelf with reſolution—the effort was not eaſy.

At length the diſtant ſound of ſteps met his ear; he heard the bolts of a door undraw. He liſtened in dreadful perturbation, pale, trembling—his fluttering breath almoſt ſuſpended. The door moved—"now, oh! my God, ſupport me," he would have ſaid; but the words died on his tongue, and he again ſunk, loſt in inſenſibility.

It was ſome time before he recovered—ſlowly and imperfectly his ſenſes returned.

His recollection was bewildered—yet the executioner, torture, and death, flitted before him. He looked around—and saw with astonishment, he was no longer in his prison. He was lying on a sofa, in a room splendidly furnished, and lighted with numerous branches of chandeliers. He was not long alone—the door was opened by the governor, who, approaching him with the coldest contempt, said: "The death you were too cowardly to meet, I have at present averted from you. Unworthy as you are of life, it is now your own; on condition, however, that you quit the kingdom, at least during my life, and transport yourself to America. This you owe to my safety. The remembrance of an obligation once conferred upon me by your father has induced me to risk thus much to serve you. Do not add to your other crimes that of ingratitude. The executioner, when he entered your dungeon, believed you dead, and I have not undeceived him; you were brought here by a servant whom I can trust. Disguise your-

yourſelf in theſe cloaths," and he pointed to a ſailors dreſs which lay on a chair, "I have prepared the means of your eſcape to Breſt—there embark for America, and let me hear of you no more."

There was a time when no man durſt have ſpoken thus to the marquis; but he was now humbled by ſhame and guilt, and he accepted life with joy, even on the ignoble terms on which it was offered.

The governor left him whilſt he changed his cloaths—when he returned, the marquis would have thanked him, but he ſtopped him ſaying, "you owe me nothing—make a better uſe of life than you have hitherto done, and I ſhall not repent my bounty."

He then led the way through various ſubterraneous paſſages, till they came to a ſmall door, which opened upon ſome fields; he deſired the marquis to haſten acroſs them—where he would find a chaiſe waiting for him—the driver of which had already received his orders.

He obeyed—and was ſoon far diſtant

from Paris. On his arrival at Breſt, he enquired for a veſſel bound to America, and then firſt recollected the low ſtate of his finances. He now thought his ſituation hopeleſs—he put his hand involuntarily in his pocket, and diſcovered the bounty of the governor had provided for all his wants. A purſe well repleniſhed was in the pocket of his jacket: ſilently he offered his thanks to his kind friend, and being informed there was a ſhip ready to ſail for Quebec, he ſecured a paſſage in her.

During the voyage he was confined to his bed—a confinement which gave him ample time for reflection—for repentance—for bitter regret. The change, which in the courſe of a few months had taken place in his ſituation, was ſo great and afflictive, that often, as he reflected upon it, it appeared like a terrible dream. From holding a place in the firſt ranks of ſociety,—from bearing a name, which, till he diſgraced it, had never known a ſtain,—from being an object of envy, or admiration to all

all with whom he was connected,—he was become an alien to his country,—a ſtranger to his name,—a friendleſs wanderer,—oppreſſed with the crime of murder, flying from his own country to ſeek a ſhelter in deſert regions, from that juſtice he had ſo dreadfully offended.

Though in the firſt moments of his eſcape, he had rejoiced in life, yet now in a ſick bed, where his ſituation appeared to him ſuch as it really was, he looked with dread to future years.

As he approached the ſhores of Canada, he heard, without participating in them, the exclamations of pleaſure which inſpired his companions. To his mind, ſhut to every poſſibility of happineſs, pleaſure was irkſome, and joy unwelcome. He landed with the other paſſengers at Quebec, but there left them, and wandered into the country, careleſs whither.

Reduced by ſickneſs and long confinement, he proceeded very ſlowly. His meagre and wretched appearance attracted

the notice of a poor Canadian, and ſhe invited him to her cottage.

At firſt he refuſed—but the ſimple hoſpitality of the poor creature at length overcame his repugnance, and he became her inmate.

In the day he uſed to wander about the country, devoted to repentance, and at night he would retire to the cottage, to find a ſhelter, but not repoſe.

In a country bountiful as that in which he reſided, the means of ſubſiſtence were eaſily procured, and his purſe was ſtill little diminiſhed. He continued nearly two years in this melancholy ſituation, when on returning one evening to the cottage, his hoſteſs told him a man had been all day waiting to ſee him.

Aſtoniſhed at this circumſtance, it immediately occurred to him it was an officer of juſtice from France—and he formed an inſtantaneous reſolution of ſecreting himſelf.

Though life had long ceaſed to be of any

any value, though his days were ſpent in prayer, and his nights in anguiſh yet his ſoul recoiled from the idea of being the victim of public juſtice. To the governor alſo he owed it, to keep his exiſtence unknown. He therefore quitted the cottage, and without diſcloſing his intention to the old woman, directed his ſteps to a neighbouring wood, amongſt the intricacies of which he hoped to be ſecure, till his purſuer weary of a fruitleſs ſearch ſhould return to France.

Here he paſſed two days of exquiſite torture; fearful of moving even to ſeek the food which nature required. No foot, however, approached his hiding place, and at length he ventured to quit it. He found wild fruits in abundance, and having ſatisfied his appetite was returning, when from behind ſome trees cloſe to him, a man appeared—to avoid him now was impoſſible—and the marquis, thinking his fate inevitable, ſtopped.

The ſtranger ſeeing his conſternation addreſſed him in French, and bade him

compose him. "I have brought you a letter," said he, "from Monsieur du F—— take it—that will explain my errand."

The marquis took it and read as follows:

"When my heart prompted me to save you from death, besides a motive which I have before assigned, I thought, in the midst of depravity, I perceived some latent principles of virtue. The life you have led in America, of which I have been well informed, has confirmed that opinion. I am now going to put both your gratitude and your principles to the test. Can you, to serve me, undertake a charge which you must consider as most sacred?

"Placed in a situation, which has made me but too often mourn the evils of tyranny, I have ever endeavoured as much as possible to soften the rigours of captivity, to give the sword of justice to the gentle hand of mercy, and to lead tenderness and pity, even to the doors of the prison. Seldom has my power been equal to my wishes, yet have I never wilfully omitted an opportunity of doing good.

"In

" In the affair of ſorrow, in which I claim your aſſiſtance, the circumſtances are moſt aggravated.—A nobleman of the firſt rank became obnoxious to government by the avowal of principles but too daringly philanthropic. He was inſtantly marked for deſtruction, and ſoon after ſent here with a meſſage, that my life ſhoud be the forfeit if I ſuffered him to eſcape.

" For ſeveral months he lingered in theſe dungeons, and at length died of a broken heart,—having been cruelly refuſed his laſt requeſt to ſee his wife and child.

" As ſoon as this amiable woman heard of his fate, in the frantic agonies of her grief, ſhe imprecated the bittereſt vengeance on the court which had deſtroyed him. In vain her friends endeavoured to calm her rage. She eluded their vigilance, and with her infant daughter in her arms, flew to the Thuilleries; where ſhe publickly told the tale of her calamities. She was ſeized by the police, and conveyed here.—On entering, ſhe earneſtly entreated me to admit her to the cell where her huſband

died. I granted her requeſt, and uſed every effort in my power to mitigate her ſorrow—but in vain! From the moment of her entrance ſhe refuſed all ſuſtenance, and after a long ſtruggle with youth, and a naturally ſtrong conſtitution, ſhe fell a victim to her fate.

In her laſt moments, ſhe ſolemnly enjoined me to take charge of her infant, and for ever to withhold her from the murderers of her parents. Though the eſtates had already been confiſcated, the life of the child was of ſome importance, and it was but too probable might be ſacrificed to ſtate policy.

I promiſed all ſhe requeſted, which ſeemed to ſoften the bitterneſs of her laſt moments. As ſoon as ſhe was interred I ſent the little orphan privately to a diſtant relation of my own; and it was generally believed it ſurvived not its mother.

"When I no longer dreaded ſuſpicion, I ſent for her; ſhe paſſed for the child of a poor relation; and has from that period been the ſweeteſt ſolace of my life: but alas!

alas! I am now declining; I feel I ſhall not long be able to protect her, and fain would I leave her ſecure from the perils of wanting a friend. My laſt promiſe to her mother was, that ſhe ſhould not remain in France after my death;—ſhe is only now in her twelfth year,—lovely as the morning in ſummer, and virtuous as a cherub.

"Hear me, my lord, and weigh well what I ſay, as you will anſwer it to your God, as you hope for pardon of your offences, as you expect to taſte of future felicity; will you be a parent to my child? If the charge is too great, do not undertake it, I can allow for human nature, I have felt its weakneſs and will acquit you—but take her not to deceive me! The eye of heaven will be over you, and will mark your actions, when my ſight is cloſed in darkneſs, and my pen can requeſt no more. Be faithful or ſincere; accept religiouſly, or openly decline, my requeſt! you are ſtill young, yet old enough to be a protector to my child, till years and experience

perience have given her powers to guard herſelf.

The perſon who brings this, will receive your anſwer."

Adieu. du F——

The marquis no ſooner read the letter, then he determined to accept the charge, and happy to have an opportunity of proving his gratitude, he wrote immediately to Monſieur du F——promiſing to deſerve his utmoſt confidence.

The bearer of the letter, to whom he communicated his reſolution, gave him a large ſum, and told him to prepare ſome place for the reception of the child—he then returned to France.

As no abode was ſo agreeable to the marquis, as that in which he had long reſided, he purchaſed it of his hoſteſs, who was ſtill to take charge of his domeſtic concerns, and buſied himſelf in improving the cottage, till it wore an appearance of European elegance. This occupation, and its motive, gave a degree of cheerfulneſs

to

to his mind, to which it had long been a ſtranger.

In a few months the young orphan arrived, bringing with her books and every thing a retired ſituation demanded. She was the bearer of a letter from Mons. du F—— repeating his ſolicitations, that ſhe might experience the tendereſt treatment.

The amiable girl, in leaving for ever her ſuppoſed uncle, whoſe kindneſs had been parental, was impreſſed with the deepeſt ſorrow, and it was long before the indulgence of the marquis proved any conſolation.

The cottage, which had received every improvement which taſte could give it, was ſurrounded by a garden, in the cultivation of which he now found much amuſement. His young charge aſſiſted him in the lighter labours, and her converſation diverted many hours which had formerly been ſad and ſolitary.

The cultivation of her mind opened alſo new ſources of intereſt; her underſtanding was ſtrong, and her deſire of improve-

ment

ment ceaſeleſs. The marquis in early life had been fond of reading, and had a taſte for elegant literature, though diſſipation and its baneful conſequences had ſince made him inſenſible to their charms. He now with ample leiſure for mental improvement, again applied himſelf to ſtudy, and his young pupil made the moſt rapid progreſs.

Several years rolled on in this manner; and could the weight of remorſe, with which his ſoul was loaded, have been removed from it, he had lived in uninterrupted tranquillity; but this no power could obliterate,—no Lethean draught waſh away—it caſt a gloom over his brighteſt moments, repelled the ſmile of pleaſure, and checked the riſing hope of dawning happineſs.

For two years Monſieur du F—— ſent regularly a remittance to America by the faithful meſſenger who eſcorted his ward; but the third was leſs propitious—the benevolent governor exiſted no more!

He ſunk to the grave lamented, beloved,

loved, almoſt idolized, by every one who knew him. Placed by a variety of circumſtances in a ſituation, where every feeling of his heart was perpetually outraged, his benevolence, his tenderneſs, his generoſity, were conſtantly exerted to ſtem the torrent of ſanguinary oppreſſion. When deſpair and anguiſh groaned in chains, when the loathſome dungeon ſeemed to exclude every ray of hope, he appeared, the harbinger of pity, to looſen the chains, and to ſoften the bitterneſs of ſuffering. To him only it appeared poſſible to make reſpectable a poſt, which had ſcarcely been held but with deteſtation and abhorrence.

Sincerely was he lamented by the marquis and Adele; the former owed to him more than life—his return to virtue, the little happineſs he enjoyed in this world and the hope of pardon in a better. To Adele he bequeathed a fortune more than ſufficient for her moderate wants; to the marquis an annuity, and to both his laſt ſolemn benediction.

The marquis continued from that time

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in quiet retirement in America, till ſome belief of his exiſtence having tranſpired in France, a perſon was ſent over by the government to aſcertain the fact. The marquis was fortunately apprized of this; the terrors it gave riſe to were not eaſily lulled, and he determined to haſten to England, and ſeek the friend whom once he ſo ſincerely loved. This reſolution formed, was almoſt immediately executed. He embarked with Adele and his faithful domeſtic, and arrived in Glamorganſhire only a few days before yourſelf. He immediately repaired hither. My father, who had heard of his ſuppoſed death, was aſtoniſhed beyond deſcription to receive a note requeſting an interview. He could ſcarcely perſuade himſelf there was not ſome deception in the affair, and almoſt with a determination of unbelief repaired to the inn where the marquis was. There, however, he was ſoon convinced of the fallacy of his ſuſpicions—for though illneſs and ſevere affliction had robbed the marquis

marquis of all exterior graces, yet his features were unaltered.

He received my father with a mixture of joy, confuſion, and ſhame, and as ſoon as his firſt emotions were a little ſubſided, requeſted forgiveneſs for all that had paſſed.

Softened by his unaffected contrition, by the ſituation to which he was reduced, my father claſped him to his boſom, and aſſured him of his unalterable regard.

The marquis related every thing which had paſſed, and ſuppreſſed not the moſt atrocious action of his life.

You will eaſily ſuppoſe he was not ſuffered to remain at the Inn; the hermitage had before been made habitable, and he was ſoon the eſtabliſhed poſſeſſor of it. I had long wiſhed for ſome female neighbour, and what I have ſeen of Adele has already made me rejoice in her arrival."

Here my ſiſter ceaſed, and ſo various were the emotions with which her narrative filled me, that I was unfitted for all

conver-

converſation, and inſtead of joining my father and the reſt of the company, I retired to my own room.

During my ſtay in Glamorganſhire, I had frequent opportunities of being with the lovely Adele, who ſoon became very intimate with my ſiſter. The amiable girl could not be ſeen with indifference, and the pity which I firſt felt for her ſituation was ſoon converted into a ſofter paſſion. I returned to my ſhip, but found I had left my happineſs behind me. As it was then war, I could not quit my ſtation; I wrote therefore to my father who had always treated me with the moſt liberal kindneſs, and told him the ſtate of my heart. He immediately anſwered my letter, and ſaid, "if the regard was mutual I had his ready concurrence." He offered to ſpeak to the marquis upon the ſubject. —He did ſo, and received ſuch an anſwer as I could have wiſhed. Filled with joy at this intelligence, I counted anxiouſly the hours till I could return to Glamorganſhire.

Nearly

Nearly ſix tedious months tranſpired before that happy period,—at length it came. My Adele received me with unaffected pleaſure, and our nuptials were ſoon after ſolemnized. Never did Hymen ſmile on a happier couple; many years have elapſed ſince that period, and many changes have happened. The marquis lived not long after our marriage, the conſtant anguiſh of his mind deſtroyed his health, and at laſt carried him to the grave. He was only thirty-ſix when he died,—a melancholy example of the fatal effects of worldly proſperity and unſubdued paſſions; and a proof that the gifts of fortune, the attraction of perſonal charms, the powers of a capacious mind, are all of little value when the virtues of humility, of ſelf-command, and of integrity, are wanted.

As the duties of my profeſſion obliged me ſo frequently to be abſent from my family, I hired a houſe near Lymington, in Hampſhire, where for many years I have lived in almoſt uninterrupted happineſs. I

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am the father of four children, and though I ſpend leſs time with them than I could wiſh, I have ſtill the moſt exquiſite pleaſure in their ſociety, when we do meet. My Adele has formed their minds to virtue, and her example has led them to excellence.

I was inadvertently later than I intended to night in returning to my frigate; but as your hoſpitality, madam, has ſheltered me from the inconveniences to which I might otherwiſe have been expoſed, I ought not to lament it.

Here Captain Algernon ceaſed; and Mrs. Carter, who had been much amuſed and intereſted by this narrative, endeavoured by every attention to ſhew him he was not an intruder. In the morning he returned to his ſhip, thanking, with unaffected ſincerity, his kind hoſteſs.

A TALE OF OTHER TIMES.

Though preſſed with ills, and exerciſed in care,
Yet never let the virtuous mind deſpair. CATO.

AMONG the noble families of Spain, who ſuffered moſt ſeverely from the invaſion of the Moſlems, was that of Edin, count of Almara. He had beheld their firſt attempts with grief and indignation, and had in vain urged the neceſſity of oppoſing inſtant force to their encreaſing progreſs. The critical moment for action was loſt in uſeleſs deliberations; and the treachery of Count Julien, and the tardineſs of Roderic completed the ruin of the Spaniſh monarchy.

Almara, though he hoped but little from the coſtly preparations of Roderic; who, in his golden trappings, his ſplendid diadem, and his ivory car, was rather an object to dazzle,

dazzle, than to terrify a warlike enemy, accompanied him to the field with the moſt choſen of his vaſſals. He ſaw with indignation the king's ſhameful retreat, and diſdaining to ſully the long-tried valour of his fame by a baſe ſurrender, he quitted not the bloody field of right till reſiſtance could effect no more. His ſon, a youth of fifteen, fought by his ſide. He inherited all the courage and intrepidity of his father, and had, during the combat, performed prodigies of valour.

The Count, with this youth, and a band of choſen warriors, effected their eſcape from the purſuit of the Moſlems, which continued three ſucceſſive days.

In the ſtrong town of Eciga, ſituated on a branch of the Gaudalquivir, this little party found a temporary retreat—but not long were they allowed to ſlumber in inactivity. The victorious Saracens, fluſhed with conqueſt, and grown inſolent from the feeble reſiſtance they met with, ſurrounded the walls of the devoted town. Not all the valour of the Goths, though nerved by

deſpair,

deſpair, and fighting for liberty and life, could ſupport them againſt the numerous hoſts of their enemies. The ſtruggle, though bloody, was ſhort, and the ſtandard of Mahomet was unfurled on the walls of the ramparts. The defenceleſs inhabitants were ſlaughtered by the victors with all the cruelty of fanatic rage, and Almara with difficulty found means to quit the city.

He had, during the heat of the battle, been ſeparated from his ſon, and great as was his paternal anxiety, he had no means of ſatisfying it. He could only ſeize his ſword, and in the general confuſion eſcape from the walls of the town. This was effected at the hazard of his life. Encumbered by a weight of armour, and weary from long exertion, he jumped from the ramparts; and when he recovered from the ſhock which his fall had occaſioned, he found himſelf lying in the midſt of a heap of ſlaughtered Moſlems. He aroſe, and diſengaging himſelf from his armour, haſtened to the retreat which a neigh-

bouring wood seemed to offer. Here, in solitude and want, he mourned the fate of his wretched country, and his own ruined fortunes. For many days he secreted himself in this spot, sheltered by a cavern, formed by the hand of nature. One evening, as he was sadly bemoaning the probable death of his son, he heard footsteps advancing. He seized his sword, determined to part with his life as became a warrior. He placed himself near the mouth of the cavern, and with an undaunted brow, waited the approach of the assailants. They entered—the Count lifted his arm, and was in the act of plunging his sword into the breast of the foremost, when he discovered three of his vassals. He recognised them with joy, and welcomed them with a smile, long a stranger to his brow.

They had, like himself, escaped from the general slaughter, and had since been secreted in the wood.

To the first enquiry of the Count, "had they

they ſeen, or did they know any thing of his ſon?" they could give no ſatisfactory anſwer.

Doubting not but he had periſhed by the ſword of the Moſlems, the unfortunate father, whom adverſity had before been unable to ſubdue, now gave way to all the violence of grief. He deplored the noble youth, thus untimely ſnatched to the grave, at the moment when his worth was opening to maturity, when his bleeding country called upon him for ſupport, when her nobleſt ſons were either the ſlaves of the conqueror, or miſerable fugitives, without patrimony or hope.

The companions of Almara attempted to conſole him: they intreated him to ſupport like a man what was the expected fate of every ſoldier, and aſked, "was it not more deſirable to fall covered with honour in the field of battle, than to lead a miſerable and fugitive life, without a home to receive, or a country to acknowledge them?"

The voice of nature was not to be

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ſilenced by the efforts of philoſophy; the count, whoſe ſpirit had ſtruggled with other calamities, drooped beneath this; the exhortations of his friends were heard in ſilence, and totally failed of effect. Even their propoſal of endeavouring to unite themſelves to the few Spaniards who ſtill retained ſome feelings of patriotiſm, was received with indifference.

What, however, perſuaſion could not effect, time, and the efforts of reaſon and religion, accompliſhed.

The count, after paſſing ſix months in his ſecret retreat, determined once more to unſheath his ſword, and join the few valiant adherents who ſtill endeavoured to maintain the rights of their oppreſſed country.

The field of Xeres had appeared to ſeal the doom of the Goths; diſmay had followed defeat, and peſtilence and famine had ſince aſſailed them with irreſiſtible fury. The more timid, or leſs patriotic, yielded to the force of the Moſlem arms, and became ſubject to the conquerors: but there were yet

yet thoſe who diſdained all capitulation, and amongſt this ſmall number was Count Almara. He joined the braveſt patriots, who wielded the ſword in defence of Seville and Merida, which were now beſieged by the invincible Muſa.

He collected round the walls the braveſt of his troops, and oppoſed to the efforts of deſpair, the power of numbers, and the confidence of repeated victories. Theſe were ſucceſsful; but not till famine lent its aid; when the feeble remnant of the Viſigoths were allowed the alternative of tribute or exile.

The Count choſe the latter; and his eſtates, with thoſe of the other nobles found in arms, were confiſcated.

He retired, broken in ſpirit, and mourning over his deſolated country, with a few valiant companions, to the Aſturian vallies, where the flame of liberty was ſtill warmly, though ſecretly, cheriſhed.

In a life expoſed to conſtant dangers, and far removed from luxury and pomp, a little band of hardy warriors revived the

virtues, which a long courſe of feminine indulgencies had almoſt extinguiſhed. In many a bloody encounter, they taught the Arabs, that all the valour of Spain was not ſubdued, and that the arm nerved with courage, and fighting for liberty and life, is not eaſily ſubdued.

It was in an encounter, of which Almara had the command, that, advancing in purſuit of a band of diſcomfited Arabs, he conſiderably outſtripped his companions, and was advancing ſingly. The Moſlems were too intent on their own ſafety to look behind, and the dauntleſs Count was purſuing, when his horſe was ſtopped by the body of a Saracen, which lay acroſs the road. He was bleeding, and appeared ſeverely wounded. The Count alighted—the humanity of his nature prompted him to give every aſſiſtance in his power: he ſurveyed the ſenſeleſs object, who ſeemed to have fallen, and been trampled on by the flying fugitives. His ſituation demanded immediate aſſiſtance. The Count bound up his wounds with ſuch parts of his dreſs

as

as he could tear off, and then gently lifting the ſtranger acroſs his horſe, conveyed him to his tent. In a ſhort time, the Saracen revived; but on opening his eyes, and beholding himſelf the captive of a Spaniard, he heaved a deep ſigh, and inſtantly cloſed them.

The Count, who perceived his apprehenſions, uſed every argument in his power to aſſure him he was in ſafety, but in vain.

The youth, who was the only child of a noble Arabian, had been nurtured in all the pomp of a court; and though, in compliance with the manners of the times, he had enliſted under the banners of the commander of the faithful, he loathed the toils and hardſhips annexed to the life of a ſoldier. He had paſſed into Europe in the train of Muſa, which was compoſed of the flower of the Arabian nobility; but he had long regretted his temerity, and pined for an opportunity of returning to the luxurious indulgencies of his father's palace. He had in the late rencontre received a wound,

which furniſhing him with a pretext for quitting the combat, he was haſtening to ſecure his retreat, when, fainting with the loſs of blood, he fell from his horſe. The animal purſued its way to the Moſlem camp, leaving his maſter extended on the ground. Here he lay a conſiderable time; his companions, in their haſty retreat, could afford him no aſſiſtance; and as many of them paſſed over his body, he had conſidered his fate as inevitable. Inſtead of making the exertions which might yet have ſaved him, he vainly implored aſſiſtance of others; but each was too intent on his own ſafety, to ſpare a thought for him. Seeing himſelf, as he believed, devoted to inevitable death, terror deprived him of ſenſe; and to this he muſt have fallen a ſacrifice, but for the timely humanity of Almara. No ſooner, however, was he ſenſible of his preſent ſituation, than he gave way to all the paroxyſm of grief. He wept, —he deplored his wretched fate, and deprecated the hour when firſt he left the ſecurity of his paternal roof. His anguiſh and lamentations

mentations increaſed the effuſion of blood, and made his ſituation very alarming.

The Count uſed every effort to diſpel this cauſeleſs terror. There was in his diſpoſition a ſoftneſs calculated to win all hearts. A long life of arms had given no ferocity to his feelings. Collectively as the enemies of his country, the uſurpers of its rights, and the deſtroyers of its liberties, his ſoul was irritated againſt the Saracens, and in the field of battle he would have oppoſed them with the laſt drop of his blood; but ſingly as men, vanquiſhed, and in his power, every thought of enmity ceaſed; he no longer recollected the difference of nation or faith, his only wiſh was to ſuccour.

His tenderneſs, and the mildneſs of his manners, at length gave the youth ſome degree of confidence, and he ventured to regard, and to addreſs his benefactor. Almara was not ignorant of Arabic, and on the preſent occaſion, he had reaſon to congratulate himſelf on this acquirement.

As ſoon as the wounds of the Saracen were healed, his benefactor ſignified to him, that he was perfectly free, and that as ſoon as it was practicable, he might rejoin his countrymen. The youth, who was not devoid of generoſity, penetrated by this unexpected lenity, poured forth the warmeſt acknowledgments, and declared that many a captive Spaniard ſhould bleſs this conduct.

"And have you," demanded the Count eagerly, "many captive Spaniards in your own country?"

"Many, I doubt not; it is however ſome time ſince I was there."

The Count, in whoſe boſom a ſecret hope had ariſen, that his ſon might be one thus redeemed, gave a particular deſcription of him, and dwelt with parental fondneſs on his many and promiſing virtues.

The youth aſked where he had laſt fought.

"At the battle of Eciga."

"Then I fear he is among the ſlain. I was

was attacked upon the ramparts by a youth, who anſwered your deſcription. My father's vaſſals had particular orders to reſcue me at the hazard of their lives, whenever danger approached me. The nervous arm of my opponent would ſoon have levelled me with the duſt, had I not been ſnatched from death by theſe men. I fear they did not ſpare an enemy—that generoſity we have to learn of you."

Almara groaned bitterly at this recital; every hope had before been feeble, but ſtill a ray had clung to his heart—that ray was now extinguiſhed. He knew his ſon too well to believe he would tamely yield—but to numbers, even he muſt ſubmit.

As the melancholy certainty of his death ſeemed to gain ſtrength by time, the deſolate parent felt that every chance of happineſs in this world was loſt for himſelf; and he regretted that his own life had not been ſacrificed, 'ere he ſaw the deſtruction of public and private happineſs.

Among the numerous vaſſals who had attended the Count in the firſt conteſt

againſt the Saracens, five only remained; the reſt had either fallen in battle, ſubmitted to the power of the Moſlems, or been carried into captivity. Four years had elapſed ſince that period.

He was ſitting one evening at the door of his tent, converſing with his young gueſt, when a ſqualid, miſerable figure approached him. Diſeaſe, ſorrow, and poverty ſeemed to have impreſſed their legible characters on every feature. Almara regarded him with pity, and offered him the ſhelter of his tent. Scarcely had he done ſo, when he recogniſed amidſt the ravages of ſuffering, one of his faithful adherents.

The man, who had inſtantly known his maſter, now fell at his feet in ecſtaſies of joy, and uttered the moſt incoherent expreſſions of delight.

When he was ſufficiently recovered to give ſome account of himſelf, he ſaid he had been taken priſoner at the battle of Eciga. He was carried by his conqueror to the neighbourhood of Cuſa, where

having refuſed to embrace the Moſlem faith, he had been treated with the utmoſt rigour. He had endured almoſt every cruelty which fanatic malice could invent, till at length his chains became ſo galling, he prayed for death, as his only deliverance. At this time the means of making his eſcape offered; he knew if detected, he ſhould be impaled alive, but he had little more to dread than what he already ſuffered, and he determined to make the deſperate attempt. He ſucceeded after encountering perils, which he acknowledged, had he foreſeen, would have appalled even him. — but, in being reſtored to his maſter, he found the recompence of his ſufferings, and in ſeeing the ſtandard of the Goths once more unfurled, his beſt hopes revive.

The count, with a melancholy ſigh, aſked him if he knew the fate of his young lord.

An embarraſſed ſilence ſhewed that he did—and on further enquiry he acknowledged that there was little doubt but that he

he had fallen at Eciga. "I saw him my-"self," said the old man" just before the entrance of the Moslems, at the North rampart; and have since been informed by a soldier that he distinguished himself by his bravery to the last moment. Just as the Saracens were entering the quarter where he was engaged, his beloved young friend Roderic was furiously beset by two of the infidels. He must have fallen in such an unequal contest, but for the interference of my lord. He flew to the rescue of his friend; attacked, and killed his adversaries, and bore him in safety from the dreadful spot. Amidst the horror and confusion which ensued, all traces were lost of both, and whether they fell, or survive in captivity, is unknown."

The count was silent,—tears of anguish olled down his manly cheeks;—at length after a long pause, he said, "his death, "could I be assured of his death, I think "I should almost rejoice at, in comparison "of the dread of what he may suffer in "captivity."

The

The old man, who had experienced all it's bitterneſs, gave his aſſent, and mourned with real affection the ill fated youth, whom he had known, and loved from infancy.

The count, who in the ſociety of the young Saracen endeavoured to find ſome conſolation for his own loſs, was, notwithſtanding eager to reſtore him to his country. Ah! ſaid he, "who knows but "his father may endure pangs equal to mine!"

The hoſtile ſtate of the country, and the ſanguinary cruelty with which the war was carried on by the Moſlems, rendered his efforts ineffectual. They diſdained to treat, even for their captives, with a people they were determined to reduce to ſlavery, whoſe country they had deluged with blood, and whom they conſidered as the objects of Divine vengeance.

Though Almara was not gratified in his firſt wiſh, he endeavoured by every means in his power to render pleaſant the ſituation

tion of the young Saracen; for himſelf, he could only endeavour to wean his mind from bitter regrets, by giving all his thoughts to the preſervation of what yet remained of his unſlaved country. He was the firſt in every patriotic exertion, and though ſtill deſtined to experience diſappointment, he was the hardy warrior whoſe arm was never inactive, and the diſintereſted citizen, who felt no wiſh but for the public good. He had loſt all which could make domeſtic life happy, or gild the evening of his toilſome days; but the wiſh of communicating to others that felicity of which he taſted no part, as it was his firſt aim, was invariably his beſt reward.

PART II.

Whilſt thus the count journeyed down the path of life, his ſon, who, as has been before ſaid, was at the battle of Eciga, paſſed his days in ſorrow and captivity.

He

He reſcued his friend from the hand of the Saracens, but at the moment when he was exulting in the ſucceſs of his efforts, the entrance of the Moſlems into the city aſſured him of his fate.

In the firſt moment of victory the carnage was dreadful; neither ſex nor age was ſpared, and the ſhouts of triumph were mingled with the groans of the dying, and the loud ſcreams of infant terror.

Almara was ſeparated from his friend in the general confuſion, and arming himſelf with his ſword, he ſtood firm to meet the fate which ſeemed inevitable.

An Arabian, of a fierce and haughty demeanour, advanced towards him, and with all the inſolence of confident victory, lifted his ſabre, and commanded him inſtantly to reſign his ſword. Almara had no hope of life, but he determined to die as became a ſoldier. Inſtead, therefore, of yielding to the inſolent taunt, he unſheathed

ſheathed his ſword, and prepared for a defence worthy his fame.

Enraged at what he termed the moſt daring inſolence, the haughty Arabian aſſailed him with redoubled fury, and aimed a blow, which, had it not been dexterouſly avoided, would have ended at once both his ſufferings and his life.

But his boſom glowed with reſentment as warm, though not as ſanguinary, as that of his opponent—and his arm was more nervous. He ſoon gained a decided ſuperiority, and the fierce Arabian inflamed with paſſion, and loſing every other feeling in vindictive rage, aimed his blows with ſo little judgment that he was compleatly vanquiſhed.—Almara enjoyed not the reward of a conqueror.—His fierce antagoniſt was immediately ſurrounded by bands obedient to his nod, who ſoon overpowered Almara, and obliged him to yield.

"Take this chriſtian ſlave," ſaid the cruel tyrant to two of his followers; bind him

him in chains, ſecure him in the deepeſt dungeon, give him nothing but bread and water, and let him know what it is to oppoſe me."

The order was inſtantly obeyed. Almara was diſarmed, and ignominiouſly dragged through ſtreets where lately he had diſtinguiſhed himſelf as a warrior. He felt all the indignity of his ſituation, but he diſdained complaint, and ſilently regretting the fate of his bleeding country, of which his own ſufferings made but a ſmall part, he forgot, in his grief for public, all ſenſe of private, wrongs. He was conveyed to a priſon in the outſkirts of the town, which had formerly been appropriated to condemned criminals. Here, loaded with chains, in darkneſs and ſolitude, he had ample leiſure to lament the paſt, and to anticipate the future. But Almara, though he felt all the miſeries to which he was expoſed, had a ſpirit to ſtruggle againſt them. He knew that a ſoldier is expoſed to every viciſſitude of fortune, and that there is often very little ſpace between

between his occupying a palace or a priſon.

What hung moſt heavily on his ſpirits, was his ignorance of his father's fate;—his own ſufferings made him dread what the dearer object of his regard might be deſtined to endure.

He had not ſeen him for many hours previous to the entrance of the Moſlems; his duty had kept him in a diſtant part of the town, and the public commotion had been too great to admit of any intercourſe. Whatever his hopes, or his fears on his father's account, all was involved in obſcurity, and great as was his anxiety, he had no means of quieting it.

He was not long ſuffered to remain at Eciga; but was conveyed, by order of his cruel tyrant, to Toledo, where the ſucceſsful arms of Muſa had fixed the ſtandard of Mahomet.

Though the place of his captivity was changed, his confinement was equally rigorous—he was ſtill loaded with chains, and ſtill treated with cruelty and inſult.

He

He was one evening lamenting the deſtiny which had made him the captive of ſuch a tyrant, when ſuddenly the doors of his priſon were thrown open, and his tyrant entered. He was preceded by two ſlaves bearing lights, which he ordered them to place on the floor and retire. He regarded Almara a few minutes with fixed attention; the natural ferocity of his countenance was heightened by ſome internal emotion; his whole frame appeared convulſed, and at length he exclaimed in a voice of thunder, "Did I treat thee as thou deſerveſt, I ſhould this inſtant annihilate thee: but my vengeance demands other atonement, and the monſter who has dared imbrue his hands in my blood, ſhall pay at the higheſt price his impious temerity. Know then, chriſtian ſlave, I have only this day learned it was thou who ſo dangerouſly wounded my beloved ſon."

"I wounded thy ſon?" exclaimed Almara, whoſe aſtoniſhment would no longer ſuffer

ſuffer him to be ſilent, "I knew not even that thou hadſt a ſon."

"Then know it now," replied Halek, "and know alſo that it was thou who hurried him to the brink of the grave. It was thou, who on the ramparts of Eciga, dared to interpoſe between him and a chriſtian, whom his ſabre had laid low: it was thou, who, to reſcue an enemy of our prophet, laid in the duſt a child of the faithful. For this I will hurl on thy devoted head ten-fold vengeance; — the ſun ſhall not ſet in the valley, nor riſe to gild the lofty hill without witneſſing thy deſerved puniſhment.—The voice of a friend ſhall never greet thy ear, nor ſhall the ſoft accents of compaſſion leſſen thy woes.—As the fleeting hours paſs away, as the ſeaſons run their annual courſe, a lingering exiſtence is all which ſhall be allowed thee — Now learn to ſubmit to what is inevitable, and learn to tremble at the vengeance of a Muſſelman." So ſaying he called for his ſlaves, and ordering them to guard their

priſoner with the utmoſt vigilance, he left him.

The feelings of Almara were for ſome minutes too acute to admit of alleviation, he ſaw that he was the captive of a ſanguinary bigot, who ſeemed to enjoy the mean triumph which his power gave him. "He ſhall at leaſt find," cried Almara, "that if he knows how to torture, I know how to bear. The God whom I ſerve is powerful to ſupport me; his aid is ſtrength, his protection ſafety." In ſpite of the horror which had thrilled his veins at the threats of Halek, he felt his ſpirits revive, as his fortitude found ſupport in the arm of omnipotence.

He remembered that in devoting himſelf to the profeſſion of arms, he had voluntarily expoſed himſelf to hardſhips, and dangers; and therefore to murmur at a lot which had been that of ſome of the beſt and braveſt of his anceſtors, was weakneſs and degeneracy.

It was not long before he had occaſion

to

to practiſe ſome of the leſſons he had been eager to learn.

His ſufferings were encreaſed by every little art which ſanguinary malice could invent: the weight of his chains was made more galling, his portion of food was leſſened, and every avenue of light was barred.

He felt all the cruelty of this conduct; but he felt it as more diſgraceful to his tyrant than to himſelf. No murmur burſt from his lips; no tears diſgraced his eye. If with regret he looked back on happier days, it was with a regret unmixed by deſpondence, and with a firm confidence, that if beſt for him, heaven would again beſtow them.

This conduct, which was the beſt and only antidote to ſorrow, completely ſucceeded in ſecuring to his mind a degree of tranquillity, unknown to his cruel perſecutor. Four weeks paſſed thus, in which the rigour of his confinement knew no abatement; when his guards one morning entered,

tered, and removing from him the heavieſt of his chains, deſired him to follow them. He did ſo, and was conducted to the preſence of Halek. The rattling of what yet remained of his fetters, announced his arrival; and his tyrant no ſooner ſaw him than he appeared to contemplate his meagre and altered figure with ſecret exultation. Malignant joy ſat on his lurid features, whilſt, for ſome minutes, he preſerved a gloomy ſilence. At length he ſpoke, "thou haſt now perhaps learned what my power is able to inflict; and thy haughty ſpirit, ſubdued by ſuffering, may gladly deprecate my pity.

"Thy power," ſaid Almara, interrupting him, with indignation, "in feeling, I deſpiſe: it is the power of the tyger, who holds his victim in his graſp, and enjoys the agonies he is able to inflict. The chance of war has thrown me into thy hands; and if, inſtead of the conduct a noble mind on ſuch an occaſion would adopt, thou haſt choſen to gratify every baſe paſſion of revenge, and every cruel

art of malice, the disgrace, and even the sufferings will ultimately be thine: for knowing how differently in such circumstances those to whom I belong would have acted towards thee, I feel that not myself, but thou, art the object of pity.

"Base wretch:" said Halek, drawing his sabre, whilst rage flashed from his eyes, "darest thou thus address me? thou, a vile slave; a hated christian! but the vengeance of Mahomet shall make thee tremble." So saying he raised his sabre, and aimed the fatal blow. Almara, aware of his design, eluded his arm, and before he had time to recover himself, a man of a venerable figure entered, and saying something to him in a low voice, of which Almara distinguished only the word "son," left the room.

The features of Halek underwent an instantaneous change, and for some minutes he walked about the room in great agitation. "Is he really dead,"? cried he. "Christian monsters! dearly shall ye pay for every drop of his blood." Then turning

ing to Almara with a countenance which ſeemed ſtruggling with rage and ſorrow, he added, "for the preſent I ſpare thy life, but think not therefore that my vengeance is ſatisfied. Every drop of the pureſt blood which ever warmed the heart of a child of Allah, tenfold ſhalt thou pay, — every pang which thou haſt made me endure ſhall be alleviated by inſatiated vengeance — unleſs — though thou deſerveſt not ſuch favour, thou will purchaſe my forgiveneſs, and thy own felicity, by embracing the faith of our holy prophet; by renouncing the impiety in which thou haſt hitherto lived, and taſting the benign influence of the laws of Mahomet. On theſe conditions I may yet be induced to forgive thy crime, and to forget the bitter ſuffering which thy accurſed race has cauſed me. Speak — reſolve inſtantly on liberty and the joys of paradiſe, or ſlavery and eternal perdition.

"My reſolution," ſaid Almara, "is decided. In the religion of my anceſtors I

have been educated, and nurſed in the purity of its doctrines — theſe I will never renounce — though more than thou canſt promiſe or threaten were to be the alternative.

"Deteſtable minion," exclaimed Halek, again graſping his ſabre, "may all the evils thou meriteſt fall on thy devoted head! Tomorrow thou ſhalt quit this impious country, and learn in a diſtant land what it is to treat with contempt an offer ſuch as I have made thee.

He then called to his attendants, and Almara was re-conducted to his cell. Early in the morning his doors were again thrown open, and he was bid prepare for his march to the ſea coaſt. It was now ſo many weeks ſince he had felt the benign influence of the ſun, or been cheared by pure breezes fraught with health and vigour, that the ſudden change from darkneſs to the broad glare of meridian light was almoſt too much for his oppreſſed eyelids. His journey was long and fatiguing,

and

and firſt convinced him how much his ſtrength was infeebled by the treatment he had borne.

Halek travelled with all the pomp and parade of greatneſs, and his mean ſoul was gratified in contraſting his own eaſe with the painful and feeble efforts of his captive.

At length they reached the coaſt, and embarked for the oppoſite ſhores of Africa. Almara, at the command of Halek, was confined in the hold of the veſſel, and the chains of which he had before been lightened, were again put on.

When they embarked the weather was ſerene, and a favourable wind ſeemed to promiſe them a ſpeedy paſſage. But in a ſhort time the heavens became clouded, and the winds howled with encreaſing fury. The ſhip was toſſed at the mercy of every wave, and death ſeemed to look with delighted anticipation on the ſcene.

Almara heard the confuſion, and was informed of the cauſe: but in him it called forth no diſmay — he had every thing to

hope in death, nothing but misery to expect in life. Composing his soul to prayer, he scarcely heard the uproar which pervaded the vessel; but sat in perfect resignation waiting the event.

Not so Halek—oppressed with a thousand terrors, he ran about the vessel like one bereft of reason—implored the mariners to exert their utmost art, and promised unlimited rewards if they preserved his life. Incommoded by his presence, the master of the vessel requested him to go to the cabin—to this, his own terrors, more than any persuasions induced him, as the sight of the tremendous billows, and the sound of the threatning blast, as it bellowed in the dismantled rigging, appalled his sinking breast. In the cabin he could not rest—the sickness of despondence seized him; he burst into tears, he wrung his hands;—and was again ascending the deck, when the dreadful crash of a falling mast hurried him back. His terrors encreased every moment: the sailors declared the ship was filling with water, and called

every

every one to aſſiſt in relieving her. The captain requeſted that the priſoner below, who had not hitherto been employed, and conſequently could not, like the ſailors, be exhauſted by fatigue, might be relieved from his chains, and ſuffered to come up. This was no longer refuſed—and Almara aſcended the deck. He applied himſelf with his utmoſt power to what he was deſired to do, but ſucceſs did not crown his endeavours—the water ſtill gained upon the veſſel. In the midſt of his employment his heart was appalled by ſeeing eight unhappy victims ſwept from the deck by an overwhelming wave. He aſked the maſter if no ſuccour could be given them? The man ſhook his head, and ſaid their fate was rather to be envied, as they were relieved from exertions which muſt ultimately be fruitleſs.

The wretched Halek, who heard this ſpeech, threw himſelf on the deck, in an agony of deſpair, and called on the prophet to ſuccour a deſcendant of the princely houſe of Ommijah. He then renewed his

entreaties to the maſter, promiſed him ſtill larger rewards, and reminded him of the importance of the perſon he had on board.

My lord, "ſaid the man" I ſhall do my duty without the hope of any other reward than that will bring: but I cannot command the elements, and you would much better ſupport your dignity by encouraging the men, than by thus frightening them with weak lamentations.

This was a ſpeech, which at any other time Halek would highly have reſented; but intent only on the preſervation of his life, his ear brooked indignity, and he was callous to offence. In the hope that even Almara might conduce to this, he no longer addreſſed him in the haughty ſtrain he had hitherto uſed, but condeſcended to ſupplicate, in hopes to conciliate his ſuccour.

Almara heard him unmoved—he was as incapable of trampling on a fallen enemy as of cringing to a mean tyrant, and the threats, and time-ſerving kindneſs of Halek,

Halek, were heard with equal indifference.

Whilſt the maſter of the veſſel was ſpeaking to one of the ſailors, and giving orders, which were the laſt efforts of deſpair, he was hurled from the deck, by the ſudden reeling of the ſhip, and ſunk inſtantly in the waves. For a moment all were appalled by the dread of a ſimilar fate — to this ſucceeded confuſion and uproar. Without a commander, each was eager to follow the dictates of his own inclination; and inſtead of united exertions for their mutual ſafety, all was violence, diſputes, and noiſe.

Almara, not knowing what to do, as he was forſaken by his aſſiſtants, ſtill held the pump, which ſingly he was unable to raiſe; and ſeeing the inevitable fate, which the death of the captain ſeemed to haſten, he prepared to meet it with fortitude; and endeavoured in the midſt of ſurrounding diſmay, to reſign his ſoul to meditation, and to perfect acquieſcence in *his* will,

who holds the thunder-bolt in his hand, and guides the ſtorm by his voice.

The man at the helm now diſcovered the coaſt of Ceuta, and adviſed their endeavouring to reach it in the boat. This advice was inſtantly adopted. The boat was hoiſted out, and every one was eager to crowd into her. Amongſt the foremoſt was Halek; but he was indignantly driven back by one of the ſailors, who told him they had no room for ſuch as neither knew how, nor were willing to aſſiſt. The boat which contained about twenty people, many of them the dependants of Halek, now puſhed from the veſſel. Almara, to whom an offer had been made of a place, declined it, from an idea of the impoſſibility of reaching the ſhore in ſafety, owing to the immenſe ſurf, which the wind had raiſed. He, with Halek, and a few others were now all that remained on board. The terrors and rage of Halek ſeemed to deprive him of reaſon; he beat his breaſt—he tore his turban in a thouſand

6 pieces,

pieces, and vowed, if ever he reached the ſhores, the moſt ample vengeance on thoſe who dared inſult him.

The boat had proceeded ſome little way with an appearance of ſafety, which induced the remaining mariners to wiſh they were in her; and ſoon after, in the hope of reaching her by ſwimming, they leaped into the ſea. Before they could effect their purpoſe, a violent billow overſet her, and all on board periſhed. Halek, who ſaw this unmoved by any feelings of compaſſion, exulted that he was not in the boat, and with barbarous ferocity ſeemed to rejoice at a fate, "which, their conduct to him had" he ſaid "deſerved."

Almara heard him with ſilent indignation; whilſt his boſom ſympathized with the ill-fated ſufferers.

The men, who had endeavoured to reach the boat, not being able to effect their purpoſe, would gladly have returned to the ſhip; but, exhauſted by fatigue, they

could make no further efforts; and ſunk, unreſiſting, to their fate.

Almara and Halek were now the only ſurvivors, and the latter, who ſaw every moment his danger encreaſing, began again to lament and weep. His language to Almara was no longer that of command, he addreſſed him in the moſt perſuaſive terms, and aſked him if he could not ſuggeſt ſome method which might be effectual to their ſafety? Almara replied "no;—all human aid was powerleſs, and if, againſt all probability, their lives were preſerved, it muſt be by the invincible arm of omnipotence."

Halek looked at him with ſurprize, and ſaid "yes, he knew God and the Holy Prophet, could do much for the faithful, but at preſent, he would be content to be preſerved by human means." Scarcely had he finiſhed ſpeaking, when the ſhattered veſſel, which had been ſome time driving towards the ſhore, ſtruck violently againſt a rock, and parted with ſo dread-

ful a concuſſion, as threw Almara many yards from the ſpot where he had been ſtanding. It was ſome minutes before he recovered from the ſhock, when he did, he endeavoured to riſe, but this was not effected without much difficulty, as he had received ſeveral violent bruiſes in the fall. He looked around, and found he was left on a ſmall part of the veſſel, but ſeeing nothing of Halek, he concluded he had periſhed in the waves. It was impoſſible to feel any regret for the fate of ſuch a monſter, and Almara perceiving he was not far from the ſhore, determined to try and reach it, either by ſwimming, or by the help of ſome looſe parts of the ſhip, which were floating around him. On ſearching for what might beſt ſerve his purpoſe, he thought he heard a faint groan; but as he could perceive no one, he imagined it was only the murmur of the wind, which was now much ſubſided. In this idea he was ſoon undeceived, for whilſt he was traverſing what yet remained of the veſſel, he perceived entangled in ſome ropes, and

ſupported

ſupported only by his hands, the wretched Halek, half immerſed in water, and hanging over the ſide of the wreck.—he ſeemed nearly expiring, and was covered with blood. Almara forgot every other deſign in his endeavours to reſcue him: he called to him, and begged he would make what exertions he could to raiſe himſelf. This exhortation was for ſome time unheard—at length he ſeemed reſtored to ſenſibility, and was made to underſtand that without his own endeavours he muſt inevitably periſh. Inſtead of the efforts which might yet have ſaved him, he was ſeized by new terrors, which had nearly proved his deſtruction. Almara ſaw his danger, and, exerting all his ſtrength, drew him up, and endeavoured as much as was in his power, to alleviate every ſuffering. To his generous mind, no recollected injuries occurred, —no chilling feeling that he was ſuccouring his enemy.

Halek, who, from the time that he and his injured captive were the only ſurvivors, had conſidered himſelf without hope of aſſiſtance,

assistance, was now as much astonished as delighted at the succour he had received. His little mind, as cringing and mean in adversity as insolent in prosperity, assayed, by flattery and promises, to repay his deliverer; but he, who had acted from the purest motives, heard with contempt such idle vaunts from one who now possessed nothing, and who, when he was in the fulness of power, had no feelings but for himself. He desired Halek, if he yet wished to preserve his life, to make some exertions, as without these he must inevitably perish.

The wind, which had been some time subsiding, was now almost sunk to a calm, and though the billows were mountainous, Almara saw, with pleasure, that every hour decreased their fury. He now felt a hope of reaching the shore: a plank was soon found; but the feeble Halek clinging to one spot, dared not trust himself to move till all was ready, and even then his cowardice had nearly destroyed him: for he was so long before he could persuade himself

ſelf to venture from the wreck, that the plank was driven by the waves to a conſiderable diſtance; nor could all the efforts of Almara get it, for a long time, near.

In this interval, the cries and prayers of the puſillanimous Halek rent the air. He begged, he entreated not to be abandoned—promiſed the moſt ample atonement for all his former injuries, and declared, if Almara would return to him, he ſhould, on their landing, ſhare half his fortune.

At length Almara ſucceeded in his efforts, and throwing a rope, which he had providently taken with him, deſired Halek to catch it, and deſcend. Again his cowardice prevailed, and he ſtood trembling ſo long, that Almara declared he would riſk his own ſafety no farther. This threat was effectual—he at length deſcended, and reached the plank in ſafety; but ſo great was his diſmay at being thus expoſed to the furious billows, that he entreated, even with tears, to be ſuffered to return to the

part

part of the veſſel he had quitted. This Almara refuſed,—for though alive to compaſſion, his heart was ſhut againſt ſuch imbecility.

After two hours' imminent peril, the plank was driven on ſhore, and the fugitives had the happineſs of once more ſeeing themſelves in ſafety.

The firſt emotions of Almara were gratitude to that Being who had ſo miraculouſly preſerved him; and proſtrating himſelf on the earth, he poured out the fulneſs of his heart in fervent thankſgivings.

Halek was equally elated, but with very different views. The dread which had pervaded his mind, the idea of loſing all which, in life, he ſo highly valued, and the horror which he had of death, had preſented to him images he had never before contemplated. Sunk in vice, his mind debilitated by a long familiarity with crimes, impreſſions laſted no longer than the ſcenes which had awakened them. He exulted in his eſcape, and declared he would never

again

again quit the ſecurity of his palace, though the fate of the empire depended upon his exertions. Already the tone of ſupplication was exchanged for the voice of command, and he impatiently deſired that ſome refreſhment and means of repoſe might be ſought for him.

Almara looked at him indignantly, and made no anſwer; the command was repeated. "You will recollect," ſaid Almara, with the coldeſt contempt, "that my own fatigue cannot be leſs than your's, nor my want of refreſhment; and it would be as well, after the exertions which have been made for you, if you were to endeavour to aſſiſt yourſelf. Your preſent conduct is a proof of what is to be expected from your gratitude; it is only a ſhort time ſince you would not have dared addreſs me but in a tone of intreaty; know, however, if you have it yet to learn, that whether you act as a tyrant or a ſlave, you are equally contemptible."

The rage of Halek was burſting forth in anſwer to this ſpeech, when the ſud-

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den recollection of his desolate state, and the belief that even yet he must perish without other assistance than his own, suppressed his resentment; and he calmly said, "I meant no offence; but it is easy to suppose what I must endure, who have been so little accustomed to hardships."

"You endure no more, though you may support it worse," replied Almara, "than the lowest child of poverty. Think you that none but the rich and pampered are susceptible of fatigue and suffering?"

"Shut up in your palace, and in your own enjoyments, you have never thought of the sufferings of others; but let what you have recently endured, teach you that commiseration which will expand your heart, and make your riches flow in other channels than those of more selfish gratification."

Halek, who had listened in indignant silence to this speech, was preparing to answer it from the dictates of resentment, when,

when, recollecting that he had not his victim sufficiently in his power, he craftily suppressed his feelings, and coolly answered, "he was sorry Almara had mistaken his meaning, as he merely wished for something to eat, but did not desire any trouble should be taken about it; and if in the joy of his escape, he had spoken with too little consideration, he could only say, it was not intentional."

It has often been observed that the injured forgive; but the injuror never: thus it was at present. The generous mind of Almara retained not resentment, and he accepted this apology with the sincerity with which he believed it was made; and recollecting the long habits of indulgence to which Halek had been accustomed, he thought he had been somewhat severe in his rebuke.

Whilst Almara was thus generously and candidly allowing for a weakness he did not feel, his crafty companion was endeavouring to arm his mind with that forbearance it was still so necessary for him

to

to practice. Educated in the wiles of a court, with all the haughty prejudices of rank, and the bigotry of newly-adopted faith, it coſt him little to practice a duplicity which was become part of his nature. In the midſt of joy at his eſcape, he regretted that even for this he was indebted to the being he hated—to one who had embrued his hands in the blood of his beloved and only ſon, and to whoſe countrymen that ſon had been ultimately ſacrificed. At preſent, however, it was neceſſary to conceal his feelings, but he determined that the vengeance which now ſlumbered, ſhould hereafter be amply ſatiated.

Though they had eſcaped the death which had ſo lately threatened them, much was yet to be performed, much to be endured, before they could aſſure themſelves of ſafety. This knowledge had its due effect upon Halek, and contributed more than any other motive to curb his inſolence, and to ſuppreſs that tyrannical

ſpirit

ſpirit which knew not how to yield, but for ſelfiſh accommodation.

Almara aſcended a neighbouring hill to view the country, and to try if he could not diſcover ſome veſtiges of habitation; but none appeared, and, after a fruitleſs ſurvey, he deſcended to the plain. It was long ſince he had enjoyed reſt, and, exhauſted by inceſſant fatigue, he found it impoſſible to make any further exertions, till he had by ſome means refreſhed himſelf. He therefore propoſed to Halek to throw themſelves on the rich graſs which the vallies afforded. Halek unwillingly conſented; but he could ſuggeſt no better plan, and therefore, with many bitter murmurs, he adopted this: but he ſpent much of the time, which Almara paſſed in ſound and refreſhing ſleep, in lamenting that no exemption from the caſualties of life could be found for a true muſſulman or a prince.

After ſome hours of tranquil repoſe, Almara awoke, but the calls of hunger now began

began to be ſo preſſing, that his firſt impulſe was to ſeek for ſomething to ſatisfy them.

Halek was aſleep—he ſeemed to have juſt fallen into an uneaſy ſlumber, in which the turbulent paſſions of his mind ſtill haunted him. "I ſhall be back before he awakes," thought Almara, and he quitted the valley in a different direction to that he had before purſued. He had not proceeded more than a quarter of a mile when he ſaw a rivulet;—Thoſe only who have been parched with thirſt, and have long been deprived of the means of quenching it, can gueſs the joy of Almara at this ſight; he flew towards it, and ſatisfied himſelf with draughts ſweet as nectar. He did not go much further, before he diſcovered wild fruits, and having eaten of them, he carried ſome to Halek.

He had not re-aſcended the hill, when the ſound of a human voice met his ears. He heard it with pleaſure, hoping he was near ſome abode; but what was his ſuprize on gaining the top of the eminence, to

ſee

ſee Halek running about with all the frantic geſtures of a madman?

He awoke ſoon after his companion quitted him; and finding himſelf alone, ſtarted up in terror. He called loudly on Almara, but in vain — and conſcious of the evil intentions he nurtured, he thought they had been diſcovered, and that his victim had watched this opportunity to make his eſcape. He now lamented he had not better concealed his deſigns, and deprecated the moment in which his paſſions had betrayed him. His exiſtence he felt depended on his retaining Almara, for he was ignorant of every method by which ſubſiſtence might be procured. He traverſed the valley — he ſaw no one — his boſom panted with agitation — his whole frame was convulſed with terror — "And muſt he, almoſt in ſight of deliverance, thus periſh by the treachery of a ſlave?" he became almoſt frantic; now vowing revenge — now blaming his own unguarded folly. At length to his inexpreſſible joy he beheld Almara on the neighbouring hill, who quickly

quickly deſcended, and offered his grateful preſent of wild fruits, ſaying, "he had diſcovered a ſtream of water." Halek wiſhed ſome could be brought to him, but as Almara ſhewed no inclination to indulge this deſire, he was under the neceſſity of either walking to it, or going without. Little capable as he was of ſupplying his wants, he was ſtill leſs able to ſubdue them; and therefore though with many murmurs, he began to aſcend the hill. Long before he reached the top he declared he could go no farther; but finding that inſtead of offering to aſſiſt him, Almara regarded him with the coldeſt contempt, he proceeded to the rivulet; and having quenched his thirſt his companion propoſed that they ſhould journey onwards, as night was faſt approaching. —This was agreed to by Halek with many bitter lamentations, that of all his numerous train of horſes and ſervants, none were near to aſſiſt him; and then with childiſh fretfulneſs added, "he was already ſo fatigued he could go but little farther."

"I doubt not your being fatigued," said Almara, "but I suppose you would not wish to pass the night here, exposed to the attacks of wild beasts."

The very thought made Halek tremble, and his own safety being at all times the object nearest his heart, he travelled on for some time with tolerable speed.

To the storm succeeded an evening of uncommon beauty, the sun set with a brilliancy which tinged with gold every surrounding hill, and threw a purple gleam on the embosomed vallies: the birds carolled their gayest notes, whilst the rich fragrance of the orange trees, mixed with the spicy odours which scented the breeze, seemed to diffuse a charm on all around. Halek, when he saw the sun descend, and the shades of night gathering, whilst no shelter offered itself, felt his terrors again revive, and so far from deriving pleasure from what was evidently so grateful to his companion, he with difficulty restrained his anger that any one should dare to feel happy whilst he was miserable. His lamen-

mentations and regrets were renewed. Almara exhorted him to patience and fortitude, and ſaid they ſhould at leaſt paſs a more tranquil night than the preceding, when they had been expoſed to all the fury of the ſtorm. "Let the deliverance you have experienced," ſaid he, "teach you confidence in the arm of omnipotence; and doubt not but he who reſcued you from the waves, is able to ſhelter you from every other danger." Halek heard him with ſilent diſdain, and continued to travel on. At length the moon began to riſe with uncommon ſplendour, its ſilver tints fell on the ſurrounding objects, and at length on a ſmall hut at no great diſtance. Almara immediately pointed it out, and they proceeded towards it in the hope that it was inhabited. They knocked at the door — no one anſwered — they endeavoured to open it — but it reſiſted their efforts. Halek with impatience, and Almara with regret, now gave up the hopes which had been ſo recently awakened. At length the ſound of footſteps cheared their ſpirits, and

a few minutes after the door was opened by a venerable old man, who on being told they had ſuffered ſhipwreck and were in want of ſhelter, bade them enter in terms of the moſt ready welcome.

He ſet before them all that his frugal board afforded; which, though only fruits and water, was highly acceptable.

During their repaſt, he obſerved them both with much attention, and to the pompous narration of Halek, who with his accuſtomed oſtentation detailed his rank, and his misfortunes, he made little anſwer but endeavoured by every means in his power to draw from Almara ſome account of himſelf: but Almara was no egotiſt; and reſcued from the late terrible ſcenes, and in poſſeſſion of the freedom he now conſidered his own, he inſenſibly fell into reflections upon what plan he had beſt purſue to facilitate his return to Spain.

Though ſo near the coaſt he had no means of procuring a veſſel, or eſcaping from a hoſtile country without the aſſiſtance of Halek: this aſſiſtance, if not ſoon

offered

offered, he determined to requeſt; for though he had a very mean opinion of his puſillanimous tyrant, he ſtill did not believe him capable of violating his promiſe. Almara could eaſily picture to himſelf all his father's grief at his ſuppoſed death, and what would be the joy which his return would occaſion. — How to effect this return was the ſubject neareſt his heart. He was in a land inhabited by the profeſſed enemies of his country, and the bigotted perſecutors of his faith; and he was but too much in the power of one who might not act as generouſly as he ought. Theſe thoughts, whilſt they clouded his brow, ſo occupied his attention, that he heeded not the diſcourſe of Halek, but gladly accepted the firſt propoſal of his hoſt to retire to reſt.

Sleep, ſuch as falls only on the lids of virtue, ſoon ſealed every ſenſe in forgetfulneſs; and he enjoyed many hours of ſuch ſweet repoſe as made him an object of envy to the reſtleſs Halek. He alſo had retired to his couch but not to ſleep. Goaded by

the thorn of guilt, not all his late fatigues could promiſe him a night of tranquil ſlumbers. He had obſerved with jealous watchfulneſs the prepoſſeſſion which the old man ſeemed to feel in favour of Almara; and though he had uſed his utmoſt power to repreſent him as the moſt ungrateful of human beings, he feared he had not ſucceeded in gaining belief. To reſtore to Almara his liberty, though he had promiſed it, was what he had no intention of doing. He had conceived towards him a hatred no leſs unjuſt than implacable, and the firſt wiſh of his heart was to ſecure him in his palace where reſiſtance would be fruitleſs, and where it would be impoſſible for him to eſcape. To effect this, he found it neceſſary to cover his intentions with the veil of diſſimulation, and to deck his ſpeech in kindneſs, whilſt his heart was meditating only cruelty. Theſe thoughts, whilſt they rankled in his boſom, kept him awake the greater part of the night, and he had fallen into his firſt uneaſy ſlumber when the dawn of morning

ing awoke Almara. He arose, and walked out to taste the beauties of the hour. He had so long been deprived of the enjoyment of freedom and exercise, that they seemed now doubly delightful; the sun rose in cloudless majesty; the little winged songsters poured forth their early carols, whilst the rich vegetation which covered every spot, was mixed with a thousand odoriferous plants, whose sweets were called forth by the dewy breath of morning. Almara stood in silent admiration, and so lost in delight that he perceived not the approach of his host.

"What, my son, is it which employs thy meditations?" said the old man.

"The beauty of the morning and the charms which make your country so peculiarly enchanting. From delight of these my mind arose to contemplate their great author; and to his arm I was confiding myself for that protection and support which my present circumstances require."

"But how canst thou expect to receive it, whilst, as I am informed by thy com-

panion, thou art obſtinately determined to continue in thy hereſy? knoweſt thou not the joys promiſed by our holy prophet to the faithful? and wouldſt thou wiſh to forego them? rather rejoice that fate has committed thee to the protection of a true Muſſulman. Embrace our holy faith, and be aſſured that in ſo doing thou canſt alone hope for proſperity. I am informed that liberty, and the moſt munificent offers have been made to convert thee; but inſtead of being grateful, thou haſt rejected them with diſdain.

"Father," replied Almara, all the warmth of his ſoul animating his countenance, "what Halek has told thee, I know not, nor am I very ſolicitous to be informed. Every offer made by him I have rejected with deſerved contempt; for, were I even diſſatisfied with my own religion, which is by no means the caſe, what muſt I think of that profeſſed by a man, who can baſely violate every law of hoſpitality and honour, and trample on the rights of juſtice and humanity? who can load with chains

chains, and insult with threats, a soldier whom the chance of war threw into his power; and who, but for the interference of numbers, instead of the vanquished, would have been the victor? No, father; not by such characters as Halek will proselytes be made. For myself, in that faith in which I was born and educated, I will die; I esteem it the best, though I respect the worthy professors of all others; and were I exalted to the highest pinnacle of greatness, I would no more persecute any one for being of a different religion, than I would for speaking a different language.

"Such sentiments," replied the old man, "wert thou a Muffulman, would do honour both to thy heart and understanding; but in thy present apostacy, they will only confirm thee in error. Do not consider an evil that which is intended for thy good; but bless the moment which gave thee to the conquering arm of Halek. I cannot believe that he has dealt by thee as thou describest, nor that he is capable of such baseness. His zeal may have made him intemperate, but

recollect the motive, and thou will instantly forgive him. I know he intends to bestow upon thee honours and emoluments, which if thou art not bigotted in error, will raise thee to the highest summit of human grandeur.

"I have no ambition," replied Almara, "to be so raised; nor any wish but to return to my country and friends; I have a father whom I dearly love, and whose belief of my death will, perhaps, bring him with sorrow to an untimely grave. I freely forgive Halek the injuries which he has done me, but I despise him too much, ever to put myself voluntarily into his power. Had I any friend who would assist me to repass the waves, with joy I would relinquish every thing which he could offer, to be once more restored to my country.

"To effect that here is impossible, thou must accompany Halek to Damascus, and then, if thy wish of leaving him still continues, he will undoubtedly procure thee the means.

Scarcely

Scarcely had the old man finiſhed ſpeaking, when Halek ſuddenly appeared. He regarded Almara with more than uſual malignity; all the evil paſſions of his heart clouded his features: yet fearful of awakening ſuſpicion, he no ſooner ſaw he was obſerved, than he began to converſe with the eaſe of a man at peace with himſelf, and happy in the ſociety of friends. They ſoon after returned to the hut, and he ſpoke of the pleaſure he ſhould have in conducting Almara to Damaſcus, and there ſhewing him what he might expect from a true Muſſulman." As he pronounced the laſt ſentence, a malicious ſmile paſſed over his countenance.

Almara did not obſerve it; but replied, " however obliged he might feel himſelf for ſuch intentions, no favour could be conferred upon him half ſo great, as enabling him to return to Spain, which he hoped would be immediately done.

Halek replied, " If, when at Damaſcus, the ſame wiſh remained, it ſhould undoubt-

edly be gratified; but, at preſent, it was wholly impracticable." He then repreſented the difficulties of procuring a veſſel, without the permiſſion of the Cadi; the dangers which muſt be encountered in paſſing through that part of Spain, in poſſeſſion of the Moſlems; "whom" ſaid he, "you conſider as enemies, and whom you are obſtinately determined never to conciliate as friends."

Almara who thought all evils light, in compariſon of thoſe he might be ſubjected to under the roof of Halek, declared, "he was ſupported by a courage equal to any emergency; and that as all he required was the performance of a promiſe, he was willing to take the conſequences upon himſelf."

Halek turned angrily away; he ſaid "if a viſit to Damaſcus was ſo very diſagreeable, he had nothing more to ſay, it was not in his power at preſent to enable him to return to Spain."

Finding all arguments ineffectual, Almara determined to conſider ſome means which

which might effectually aid his purpose. He saw, with regret, that from his host he could expect no assistance; whatever his humanity, his bigotry was superior; and he thought almost every means justifiable, which gained one proselyte to the faith of the prophet—yet without some assistance Almara could effect nothing. Three days passed thus—he had been so much occupied by his own concerns, that he had not enquired how long Halek intended to remain in his present abode.

Halek, however, had not been unmindful of preparation for his departure. He had, the morning after his arrival at the cottage, by means of his host, found a person who undertook to procure him horses for his journey, and to inform his servants of his return.

Of this he said nothing to Almara, nor did he intend it, as he hoped to surprize him into a compliance, which might be otherwise difficult to obtain.

Almara in sad reflections had passed the greater part of the day, vainly endeavour-

ing to ſuggeſt ſome plan of eſcape, when towards evening, as he was caſting a wiſtful look around, he perceived croſſing a diſtant hill, a long train of horſemen. As they advanced quickly, he ſtood to obſerve them, and not without great ſurprize, at length beheld them ſtop at the door of the cottage. It immediately occurred to him, they muſt be the retinue of Halek, whom by ſome means, he had ordered to attend him. All his anxiety revived—he now regretted the tardy prudence which had prevented his timely eſcape—as no expoſure to ſuffering could be ſo dreadful, as what he expected at the hands of Halek. He did not remain long alone. — Halek, with a triumphant ſmile advanced, and ſaid he was now prepared to return to his palace, whither he expected not to go alone. "When at Damaſcus," ſaid he, "you ſhall ſee what my power can effect. I have only to ſpeak to the Cadi, and he will inſtantly fulfil my wiſhes."

"I doubt not your power," replied Almara "but I prefer ſtaying here till the permiſſion

permiſſion for my departure is procured. If you really wiſh to oblige me, you will ſuffer me to act in that way which is moſt agreeable to myſelf."

This is a matter," ſaid Halek, turning away with an air of haughty reſentment, "which has been ſo often diſcuſſed, it is weariſome to hear any more about it. Your departure from hence to Spain is impoſſible. If you will not condeſcend to oblige me, when my only wiſh is to give you pleaſure, the conſequences are your own.

He then angrily returned to the cottage, leaving Almara to feelings the moſt painful. His hoſt ſoon after joined him, and uſed every argument to induce him to accompany Halek; at the ſame time pledging his honour for the kind treatment he ſhould receive. "To embark from hence" ſaid he, "is impoſſible; or indeed from any port with intereſt leſs powerful than that of Halek's. Do not, therefore, irritate him by unjuſt ſuſpicions; but ſhew that you deſerve his favour, by relying upon his promiſes."

"Nothing

"Nothing leſs," replied Almara, "than the moſt unequivocal proofs of his baſeneſs, ſhould lead me to doubt his faith; but I repeat that he is incapable of a generous action, and that the man to whom he owes his life, he would moſt willingly tread into duſt."

"Then why ſhould he deſire thee to accompany him to his palace, when he ſo well knows that, by leaving thee here, thou muſt periſh?"

"I pretend not to diſcover his motives; they are ſuch as I ſhall never be able to penetrate."

"But is it right, or juſt to give way to ſuſpicions, which thou acknowledgeſt thou cannot juſtify? yonder is Halek coming towards us with the horſes. Baniſh from thy mind every doubt, and be aſſured thou wilt have reaſon to rejoice in thy conduct."

Almara was ſilent; he ſaw that it was impoſſible to ſtay where he was; he could not

not force his ſociety where it was acknowledged to be ſo unwelcome; but to go, was to act in direct contradiction to all his reſolves, and in defiance of his better judgment. The old man ſaw his irreſolution and preſſed him with ſuch vehemence, that he was unable to make any further reſiſtance; and when Halek joined them, he gave a tacit though unwilling conſent. They ſoon after departed—With ill-boding fears, he mounted the horſe which was led out for him; Halek endeavoured, by every attention in his power, to divert that uneaſineſs which was but too apparent; and whatever his ſecret diſtreſs, the heart of Almara was always ſuſceptible of kindneſs. Though his apprehenſions and ſuſpicions did not ſubſide, they were lulled by the attraction of every object ſurrounding. They now journeyed through vallies, rich in native luxuriance; now through groves of orange and cedar, and now climbed hills, whoſe majeſtic ſummits commanded a view of all which was grand or beautiful. No cloud obſcured the ſky, which was

ſpangled

ſpangled with innumerable ſtars; the moon ſhone with her utmoſt radiance, and gave a ſilver luſtre to the rich foliage, whilſt the balmy odours of aromatic plants ſcented the breeze as it murmured along.

Almara had a mind ſuſceptible of all the beauties of nature. Though early tutored to the inauſpicious trade of arms, yet by a beloved mother, whom he had loſt nearly three years, his mind had been ſtored with uſeful knowledge, and he had been taught to derive pleaſure and inſtruction from every ſcene of varying nature. Knowing the life to which he was deſtined, and the few opportunities he might hereafter have of mental cultivation, her whole time had been employed in taking advantage of thoſe hours, yet allotted to ſtudy. The uncommon powers of her own mind, and the high degree of cultivation ſhe had received, unuſual in that age for females to poſſeſs, had made her a moſt eligible inſtructreſs for a youth like Almara. Fond of ſtudy, and eager for the attainment of knowledge, his progreſs had more than rewarded her labours,

labours, and ſecured to himſelf a ſource of enjoyment, of which the ſucceſſive trials of his future life could not deprive him.

After journeying the remainder of the night, and the early part of the next morning, they halted during the fervour of the meridian ſun at a caravanſera on their route.

Halek, though he manifeſted the utmoſt kindneſs and attention, was ſecretly watchful of all the actions of his companion, and ſedulouſly careful that he ſhould form no plan of eſcape. He was, however, himſelf ſo conſummate a maſter of hypocriſy, and ſo completely veiled his intentions, that not a ſhadow of them was viſible to Almara; he was indeed ſo much their dupe, that he began to augur the moſt flattering effects from ſuch continued kindneſs.

In the evening they reſumed their journey, and continued to travel in the night, and repoſe during the heats of day, till they reached the neighbourhood of Damaſcus, and were in ſight of the princely domain

domain which was to terminate their journey. All that Almara expected to see, and all that he had read of magnificence, fell far short of what he now beheld. The palace of Halek was situated about two miles from Damascus, on the declivity of a beautiful hill. In front was an extensive valley, gay with varied cultivation, and watered by a river, which meandered through the whole domain. At the back of the palace, and towering above it, were planted groves of spices, whose balmy odours floated upon the breeze which lightly fanned the air. On each side were trees of orange, lemon, and myrtle; whose varied tints, and mingled fragrance, regaled every sense. The palace itself was built of white marble, supported by pillars of granite, and adorned with figures of various animals, from whose mouths issued streams of water, which were received in an alabaster fountain, and thence flowed in *jets d'eau* through the grounds.

Astonishment and admiration took possession of his mind, and he expressed all the

the pleaſure he felt. The gratification of Halek at hearing theſe praiſes was unbounded. His proud heart rejoiced, his vanity exulted, and he doubted not but the encreaſed belief of his importance would lead Almara into whatever ſcheme he propoſed.

After ſome hours of repoſe, he ſought Almara, and told him if he had before been aſtoniſhed at the grandeur of what he had ſeen, he would now be ſtill more delighted. At the ſame time offering to ſhew him the interior of the palace. This propoſal was readily accepted. Almara was indeed gratified by the taſte and grandeur every where viſible. The baths of marble ſupplied from fountains of maſſy gold—the pillars of jaſper and alabaſter—the doors of cedar emboſſed with ſilver and ivory—the rich odours ſupplied from vaſes of the moſt coſtly porcelain—the brilliant luſtre of innumerable lamps, formed a ſcene the moſt dazzling, and preſented to him a picture of the luxury and ſplendour of the Eaſt, of which he had before no idea.

"Haſt

" Haſt thou," ſaid Halek, who ſaw his aſtoniſhment, and felt himſelf elevated by it, " haſt thou, ever ſeen ſuch a diſplay of riches? and canſt thou, after beholding it, pine for the miſerable and deſolate country which gave thee being?"

" Yes, I can pine for it" replied Almara, " even in its preſent forlorn ſtate. There I firſt drew my breath, and there were my infant ideas received; every thing dear to my heart is treaſured there, and every feeling of patriotiſm and of duty make them indelible. Remember that to the encreaſing effeminacy and luxury of our nation we owe our deſtruction. Had her ſons continued the hardy warriors who once made whole nations tremble, the power of the Moſlems had been exerted in vain; and even yet, ſhould ſuffering reſtore to them their priſtine valour, they may teach their conquerors that Spain is not yet ſubdued; and that her ſons will periſh in the glorious ſtruggle, rather than live the ſlaves of a ſtranger."

" If ſuch is thy view of things" replied Halek, in a tone of diſappointment, " I wonder

wonder not at the little pleaſure my bounty affords thee. To boaſt of thy country is indeed folly; for not her whole remaining poſſeſſions would purchaſe what is here amaſſed."

"My country," replied Almara, with a ſigh, "is indeed poor; but her poverty alone is no cauſe of ſhame. Much as you deſpiſe our power, had that power been united, had the treacherous Julien been interred in her deepeſt bowels before he had betrayed her intereſts, not the united power of all the ſquadrons of Aſſyria had reduced Spain to vaſſalage and ruin."

"And doſt thou ſay this to me?" ſaid Halek, his features reſuming their wonted ſeverity;" "to me, to whoſe lenity thou oweſt the preſervation of thy life?"

"I fell by the chance of war, and not from ignoble fear into thy hands," replied Almara; "and had our fates been reverſed, you would have found that a Spaniard is not the vile thing you think him; but that he knows how to treat with reſpect a fallen enemy, and to make thoſe fetters

light which chance, not desert, had imposed."

Halek regarded Almara a few minutes in silence; then, turning from him, pretended suddenly to recollect some matter of importance which demanded immediate attention.

Almara, left to himself, traversed the splendid apartments, and as he surveyed them exclaimed, "Not all these would I possess to be so worthless a thing as their owner. Enflamed with the insolent pride of prosperity, he knows not how to temper superior rank by condescension, which rather exalt than debase it, and which alone secure that respect the insolent boaster can never command."

In traversing one of the distant apartments a small door of curious workmanship attracted his attention; whilst he was examining it he thought he heard a faint groan. Struck by the circumstance, he attentively listened; but just as he had placed his ear to the door, he heard the returning footsteps of Halek. Well knowing

ing his ſuſpicious temper, he retreated from the ſpot, and walked to the farther end of the apartment.

Halek almoſt immediately entered, and in an angry tone, demanded why he was there?

"I ſauntered accidentally hither," replied Almara, "in ſurveying the palace."

And was that your only motive?

"What other ſhould I have? did you not deſire me to go where I pleaſed? had you pointed to me any limitations, I would certainly have obeyed them."

"How dare you," ſaid Halek, without regarding the anſwer of Almara, and addreſſing himſelf to a ſlave, who at this moment entered with ſome ſherbet, "how dare you open theſe doors, when I have commanded them in my abſence to be ſhut?

The poor creature looked terrified, but made no anſwer, and Halek ſeizing his ſabre which lay in one corner of the room, ſtruck him ſo ſevere a blow, that he fell to the ground covered with blood.

Almara, ſhocked at ſuch inhuman violence, ran to afford all the aſſiſtance in his power; but two ſervants obeying the call of their maſter, carried the object of his rage to a dungeon, where he was ordered to remain three days.

"Thus," ſaid Halek, exultingly, "thus will I puniſh diſobedience; the wretch who dares diſpute, or forget my commands, ſhall bitterly repent his temerity. Power, unbounded as mine, no one ſhall dare conteſt." As he ſpoke, his eye glanced towards Almara, who replied with a contempt, he could not conceal, "yet there are more powerful beings than thyſelf, even in the loweſt ranks of life. This is confirmed by one of the wiſeſt and beſt princes who ever filled the Moſlem throne. "If," ſaid he, "a man would be rich without means, powerful without ſubjects, and ſubject without a maſter, let him depart from ſin and ſerve God, and he will find theſe things."

Halek for a moment was ſilenced, but his countenance evinced the paſſions of his ſoul.

ſoul. Almara turned from him, and quitting the apartment ſought his own. There he gave vent to the ſaddeſt reflections.

"Oh! why," ſaid he, "was my life ſpared in battle, to be committed to the mercy of this deſpicable tyrant? or why was I not ſwallowed in the waves, before I had drank deeper of the bitter cup of adverſity? oh my father! happily thou art ignorant of the lot of thy ſon; how would thy tender nature grieve, didſt thou know to what he is expoſed?

Theſe melancholy regrets ſo wholly occupied his mind, that he avoided as much as poſſible the ſociety of Halek; keeping in his apartment during the day, and ſpending a great part of the night in traverſing the ſpacious gardens. He was one evening walking as uſual; the ſun was ſet, the exceſſive heats had yielded to the cool breezes which murmured among the trees, and he directed his ſteps towards a path which led to the vallies. He was ſurprized to obſerve two ſervants ſtanding at the entrance who, when he appeared, told him they were

commanded to let no one pass. He deigned not to expostulate; but returning to the palace sought Halek. This was the hour of prayer, and he was gone to the mosque. Almara was determined to resent this prohibition, as his acquiescence in it might be construed into a submission of still greater deprivations. Little as he had to hope from the justice of Halek, and desolate as he felt his situation, he could form no conjecture why his detention was of so much importance. He now feared that his return to Spain had never been sincerely intended, yet if it had not, how much was he the dupe of artifice? Not, however in bewailing this, but in endeavouring to counteract it, did he pass his time.

In the morning he sent to request an audience of Halek; but the slave who carried the message brought an answer that his lord was particularly engaged. Was this really the case, or was it intended only to prevent those remonstrances which he was determined should be ineffectual? Whatever

ever the cauſe, Almara augured the moſt unfavourable effects from it. The more he reflected, the more perilous his ſituation appeared, and he determined, at whatever hazard, to effect his eſcape. The reſt of the day paſſed in equal diſquietude; he ſaw not Halek, nor received any meſſage from him. Night again veiled the horizon. Unable to ſleep, he would have retired to the garden, but on quitting his apartment he found, contrary to the uſual cuſtom, the door which led thither was faſtened. He was returning to his room, when he thought he heard the voice of Halek; he liſtened attentively—but all was perfectly ſtill. Preſently the ſound of diſtant hinges arouzed him; he was ſurprized, for this was an hour when every thing was uſually ſtill. He turned haſtily whence the ſound proceeded, and ſaw Halek advancing with two men. As Almara carried no light, having truſted to the lamps which illuminated the palace, he haſtily withdrew into a receſs where he knew he ſhould be unobſerved. Halek was preceded by a ſlave

bearing a torch; whilſt he was dragging ſome one who ſeemed to reſiſt his power. He was covered with blood, — the countenance of his priſoner ſpoke terror and deſpair.

Almara ſtruck by his features, examined them attentively, but what was his aſtoniſhment to behold in them thoſe of his friend Roderic? In the firſt emotion of his mind he had nearly betrayed himſelf, but a moment's recollection told him the danger of a diſcovery at a time when Roderic was evidently ſuffering from the rage of his tyrant.

He ſcarcely breathed from the fear of being heard; but following with his eyes the beloved and long-regretted object of his early affection, he ſaw him dragged towards a door, which was opened by one of the ſlaves, and they all deſcended what appeared a flight of ſteps. The door was left open; and loſing every other feeling in the hope of aſſiſting his friend, Almara followed. Halek and his companions had nearly reached the bottom, which appeared

at

at a conſiderable diſtance. Every feeling of Almara's heart was tortured when he heard Roderic in a feeble tone implore mercy.

"Mercy!" replied Helek, with more than uſual ferocity, "dareſt thou aſk for mercy who has preſumed to lift thy arm againſt my life? No, in this dungeon ſhalt thou languiſh the remainder of thy days: the light of heaven ſhall never cheer thee, nor the voice of a human being glad thy ears. I will myſelf bring thy neceſſary portion of bread, and it will require even more than thy art and temerity again to eſcape.

Almara had deſcended the greater part of the ſtairs, drawn thither by the agonizing curioſity of knowing his friend's fate.

This was, alas! but too evident. He heard the poor victim thruſt into a dungeon, and ſeveral heavy bolts drawn upon him. With light, but haſty ſteps he re-aſcended; and hurrying to his apartment, gave way to thoſe emotions he had with ſo much

difficulty reſtrained. In the agony of his ſoul, a torrent of tears bedewed his manly cheeks; he traverſed his apartment with diſordered ſteps, and was long before he could compoſe his thoughts.

Roderic had been his earlieſt and deareſt friend; in childhood they had been almoſt inſeparable, and had ſince been united in the ſame career of glory. One ſoul ſeemed to animate them; one wiſh, one deſire, and till their fatal ſeparation after the battle of Eciga, they had never been many days aſunder. What then muſt have been his feelings to ſee this friend in the power of a tyrant, deaf to every call of humanity, greedy of blood, inſatiate in cruelty, and governed only by the worſt paſſions of human nature? In the midſt of theſe reflections he was interrupted by the entrance of Halek. The unpleaſant ſenſations which his appearance always created were now encreaſed; and turning indignantly from him, Almara could with difficulty reſtrain the upbraidings and reproaches, which were every moment riſing to his

his lips. The hope of more effectually aiding his friend alone suppressed his just indignation; and in answer to the enquiry of Halek, "what it was for which an audience had been requested?" he turned towards him, and, after a moment's recollection, (for the late scene had driven almost every other from his mind) he answered, "I wished to see you to desire the performance of your promise that I should return to my native country, if I found not my abode here such as to induce me to alter my wishes. I do not find it such; for, to me, no place is so dear as that in which I first drew my breath;—no society so beloved as that of my parent and friends. To return to these is my most ardent wish; it is needless, I hope, to add that as I accompanied you hither as a visitor, my stay can only be determined by my own choice." Halek regarded him a few minutes with a look of angry suspicion, and then said, with more than his usual sternness, "is it for this I have lavished upon thee kindness,

have made thee my companion, and suffered thee to range freely in every part of my palace, when, as my captive, I might have shewn thee far different treatment?"

"The right," cried Almara warmly, "if any such you possess, is that which none but the basest of mankind would employ. I desire not to remind you of any little services I may have rendered you; but you provoke me to say it was not thus you talked the night of the storm. Half your fortune, liberty, all that I could ask, or you could grant, was then freely promised. Providence aided my feeble endeavours; your life was saved, but your promises were forgotten; and Halek in his palace, in full security and pride of power, forgets that Halek, who in the hour of dismay and death, would have knelt to the lowest of mankind.

"Tempt not," replied Halek, his face crimsoned with shame and indignation, "that power, which thou pretendest to despise; lest in showing thee its extent, I make

make thee its victim. Since thy abode here, thou haſt been treated with every indulgence, and had thy nature been capable of gratitude, my conduct had ſurely inſpired it."

"Talk not of gratitude," replied Almara, "nor abuſe words, of whoſe real import you are ignorant. Thoſe who think it a merit not to have committed every crime which diſgraces human nature, can only expect praiſe from beings like themſelves. The truly virtuous man is he, whoſe conſcience has no reproach; who has ſuccoured the helpleſs, who has taught the wretched to lean on him for comfort, and the ſinking ſpirit to rejoice in his preſence. If you would be thus reſpected, change inſtantly your conduct; ſet the captive free; looſen the galling chains you have no right to impoſe, and give to liberty the wretch, who pines in undeſerved ſuffering. Then will I reſpect your power; then ſhall my heart acknowledge your ſuperiority.

Halek, who during this ſpeech had re-

garded Almara with emotions, which seemed rising to frenzy, and prevented his power of interrupting him, exclaimed, "who has dared inform thee, I have any captives? or that by me any fetters were imposed, except to punish the disobedience of slaves?

"No one," said Almara. "Nor do you need any informer. Your actions proclaim themselves. If, however, towards me your designs are honourable, why employ your slaves to bound my walks? why not enable me to find some vessel going to Spain? You undoubtedly know such, among the many which are employed to carry over troops to desolate our bleeding country.

"Thy demand," said Halek, "is preferred with too much insolence to expect compliance; nor can I doubt, from many parts of thy discourse, that thou hast tampered with my slaves, to know the secret transactions of my palace; if thou hast, dearly shall both thou and they repent such treachery.

So

So saying he haſtily quitted the apartment, leaving on the mind of Almara reflections the moſt painful. "Is it poſſible," cried he, "to tolerate exiſtence with ſuch a monſter? who commits crimes, the moſt atrocious, and then conſiders as unpardonable the deteſtation they excite; who, whilſt ſinking into the loweſt abyſs of vice and infamy, claims that eſteem which can never be poſſeſſed but by virtue." Bitter as were theſe reflections, and expoſed as he felt himſelf to all the cruelty he deprecated, they were ſoon abſorded in others more painful.

The fate of his friend claimed every thought, and he determined to uſe every effort in his power to ſee him. He had marked the paſſage which led to his cell, but that was too well guarded to admit a hope of entrance. Whether there was any other communication was yet to be diſcovered. He feared to begin his ſearch immediately, leſt the watchful tyrant, whoſe ſuſpicions were already awakened, ſhould detect and fruſtrate it. Caution,

he

he knew was neceſſary; yet he firmly reſolved nothing ſhould deter him from endeavouring to ſee Roderic, and from aſſiſting him if poſſible, to eſcape. Difficulties innumerable preſented themſelves to this deſign, but his heart was in the affair, and he was prepared for dangers.

Whilſt he was occupied in forming plans, a ſlave entered with ſome refreſhment. Almara took a glaſs of ſherbet; but as he was lifting it to his lips, he was ſtruck by the uncommon expreſſion of the man's countenance. A moment ſufficed to declare to him the truth. He diſmiſſed the man, but kept the glaſs, the liquor of which he had no doubt was poiſoned. Such a flagrant proof of the intentions of Halek filled him with diſmay, and warned him to prepare for greater evils, than any he had yet experienced. He poured the liquor into the garden, and as he did it, ſhuddered with horror. The remainder of the day he ſedulouſly avoided Halek. When night advanced, and he knew that Halek was engaged in the apartment of the ſeraglio,

raglio, he ventured into the gardens. He paced their tafteful and extenfive range with flow and melancholy fteps; and not all the charms which art and nature had combined could divert from his mind the deep regret which poffeffed it. The undeferved fufferings of his friend were ever prefent to his imagination: he knew Roderic was not of a temper to ftruggle with the calamities of life; and though a foldier, and fearlefs of danger and death, when the honour or fafety of his country called upon him for exertion, he was by nature, timid, gentle, and wholly unfit to deal with craft. Had he been born in times lefs hoftile, war had never been his choice: he was formed to adorn domeftic life, to tafte the fweets of friendfhip, to be the folace, and fupport of his family. How ill, then, was he likely to endure the the weight of mifery Halek would prepare for him! how unfit to refift a tyrant, whofe malice was infatiable, and whofe paffions were never fubdued! "He will fink," cried Almara, throwing himfelf in

deſpondence on the graſs; "he will be loſt before I ſhall be able to inſpire him with hope." He had ſcarcely finiſhed ſpeaking, when he thought he heard, not far from him, a deep groan. He ſtarted, and inſtantly aroſe — again he heard it — but much fainter — he was convinced it muſt proceed from ſome one at no great diſtance. With the moſt agonized curioſity, he examined every ſpot, but ſaw nothing which could lead to a diſcovery. After a long ſearch he was aſſured it muſt come from ſome part of the building, and on examining minutely, he diſcovered a ſmall aperture, almoſt on a level with the ground and apparently intended only for the admiſſion of air. Stooping he put his ear to the place, but no ſound iſſued from it. Determined not to abandon the hope which he entertained that this might lead to the cell of his unhappy friend, he continued in the ſame ſpot for more than an hour, when he heard a voice again expreſſive of ſorrow. He was certain it was that of Roderic, and in his impatience to make

himſelf

himſelf known, he forgot the caution which was ſtill neceſſary. All within was total darkneſs, but he conjectured the dungeon was much beneath the level of the ground. He heard, very plainly, the clanking of chains, and ſometimes lamentations. Theſe pierced his heart; and in the bitterneſs of his grief, he lamented the hour in which he had exerted himſelf to preſerve the life of a monſter — a wretch whoſe cruelties were the ſcourge of ſociety. He reſolved to call to Roderic, and endeavour to convince him he had a friend near; but after many fruitleſs efforts, he was obliged to relinquiſh this hope. No voice anſwered — total ſilence ſucceeded — even the melancholy echo of chains had ceaſed.

He was ſtill lying on the ground with his ear to the aperture, when advancing footſteps rouzed him. He retired haſtily behind the thick foliage; and had ſoon reaſon to rejoice in this timely retreat. It was Halek, followed by two ſlaves, to whom he was talking in an angry tone. Almara ſoon diſcovered he was the ſubject.

"If,"

"If," said Halek, "he has found means to escape, not one of ye shall ever see another dawn. Had I not been surrounded by traitors, he had, ere this, been incapable of molesting me."

Almara doubted not but the latter part of this speech referred to the poison; but as Halek and his companions had proceeded onwards, he could hear no more. He returned as quickly as possible to his apartment, determined, when he quitted it again, to find some means of fastening it: as he doubted not but Halek had entered, and finding it empty, had given way to all the gloomy suspicions of his nature.

Almara threw himself on his couch, but sleep visited not his eyelids; or if he sunk into temporary forgetfulness, he was perpetually haunted by the image of his friend, who, a prey to misery, and the victim of despair, seemed fast hastening to that tomb, which had been some time ready to receive him. These ideas, which he could not shake from his mind, induced him to rise; for

for no refreſhment was to be expected from ſleep ſo perturbed. His wiſh was to return to the garden, but the events of the preceding evening had made him cautious. In paſſing through the apartments he met Halek — he ſtarted, and would have avoided him, but Halek, without betraying any emotion, or ſeeming to notice that of Almara, addreſſed him with even more than uſual civility. Almara endeavoured to ſhake off his embaraſſment, he feared the inference which might be drawn from it. Halek, however, noticed it not, and after a ſhort converſation on indifferent ſubjects, proceeded to the baths.

Almara endeavoured to baniſh his fears, and relying for protection and ſupport on the arm of omnipotence, he gave up all preſent ſolicitude for himſelf, and turned his thoughts wholly to ſome means of aiding his more unfortunate friend. To effect this, without other aſſiſtance than his own, ſeemed hardly to be hoped; yet he was too little acquainted with any of the inmates

mates of the palace, to dare truſt them on ſo important an affair. As he was revolving different plans, it occurred to him that there appeared ſomething intereſting, and which ſeemed to invite confidence in that ſlave whom Halek had puniſhed with ſuch ſeverity. To find this man was now his firſt wiſh, for he had not ſeen him ſince the moment when he was ordered to be carried to the dungeon.

He had often obſerved ſome ſmall buildings which ſtood contiguous to the wood, and which were inhabited by ſome of the domeſtics of the palace. Thither, in hopes of gaining the information he wiſhed, he immediately haſtened. He ſearched ſeveral, but found them empty. He was too much intereſted to be eaſily diſcouraged; but proceeded to one farther diſtant, and more miſerable in its appearance. Entering this, he diſcovered the object of his ſearch lying, apparently, in great ſuffering.—His head was bruiſed and ſwollen, and his groans were audible before Almara entered.

He

He advanced with the kindeſt air, and enquired of Haſan the cauſe of theſe accumulated ſufferings?

He ſaid his maſter had ordered him to be ſo ſeverely ſcourged for having left the door open, that he believed he ſhould ſoon be releaſed from all his troubles.

Almara endeavoured to comfort him; and, at his earneſt requeſt, procured him ſome water. When he was a little revived, Almara aſked him "why ſo much importance ſhould be attached to that particular door?"

Huſan replied, "It led to the priſons of the palace, and ſince his lord's return from Spain, though he knew not why, he had been more ſuſpicious of every one's going near."

Almara enquired "if there were any priſoners who had been brought from Spain?"

"I believe there are," ſaid Haſan; but my employment has always been in the palace, and I know little of other affairs. I ſuſpect from my lord's conduct, there is one

whom he wiſhes to conceal; though this is only conjecture."

Almara ſighed deeply; but doubtful how far he might truſt Huſan, he quitted him for the preſent, promiſing on the morrow to ſee him again.

At night, after having contrived to ſecure his door, he ventured to the garden, towards the ſpot where he had heard his friend's voice—all was ſtill—and throwing himſelf on the graſs, he liſtened attentively ſome time, but no ſound proceeded from within. Thinking Roderic might be at the farther end of the cell, he called to him ſeveral times, but no anſwer was returned. The moſt alarming fears ſeized him. "Either," ſaid he, "the tyrant has again removed him, or worn out by cruelty and ſuffering, the friendly hand of death has been kind to its victim." In this idea he was confirmed, when morning dawned, and the ſame univerſal ſtillneſs prevailed. With ſlow and melancholy ſteps he returned to his apartment, which he reached unſeen. His mind was too much abſorbed in grief to admit

admit of repoſe, and he paſſed the hours, till day gilded the ſky, in mournful reflections on his unfortunate friend, and ſad preſages of his own fate.

According to his promiſe, though hopeleſs of any information which could now be beneficial, he viſited Haſan, contriving to carry with him ſuch little refreſhments as he thought would be acceptable. He found the poor creature in the ſame ſtate as the preceding day, except that he was weaker. He accepted with thankfulneſs the preſents of Almara, ſaying that ſo great was the anger of Halek, he commanded that only ſufficient food ſhould be given him to prevent ſtarving. — In conſequence of which he had ſuffered the extremeſt miſery. When he had refreſhed himſelf with this welcome ſupply, he ſaid, " You aſked me whether I could inform you if there were any priſoners in the palace? Abd'allah, who brings me my ſcanty proviſions, and who is the favourite ſlave of his maſter, told me this morning there was one. I endeavoured to obtain of him farther information

tion, but he seemed surprised at my curiosity, and absolutely refused to satisfy it. I was afraid of incurring his suspicions, and therefore, when I saw he was angry, I dropped the subject."

"I thank you at least for your intentions," said Almara, "but all information would now be useless, as the friend about whom I was so anxious, is, I believe, fallen a victim to his fate." He then recounted in what manner he had seen Roderic, and since heard his lamentations.

"If you will be cautious," said Hasan, "I can give you an opportunity of being certain of his fate—but remember how much depends upon a discovery, and that more than death would be the punishment of him whom Halek should find visiting the cell.

Almara promised all that was required; Hasan then informed him that not far from the extremity of the gardens was a small building, now in ruins, which had once been a temple. On the left side, on a level with the ground, was a door, so small that it could

could only be entered on the knees. This conducted, by a winding paſſage, to the cell Almara believed the priſon of his friend. The ſecret was, however, known but to few, "and chance," ſaid Haſan, "made me acquainted with it. Come to me when every one is retired to reſt, and I will endeavour in the mean time to procure you a torch, which, by the aſſiſtance of a lad on whom I can depend, I think I ſhall be able to obtain. But again I repeat, be prudent. Halek (perhaps you know why) has already ſome deſigns againſt you; and a very little would arouſe that vengeance which never long ſlumbers. You ſee in me what the beſt of us may expect. I ſpent my youth with his father, fighting the battles of our Prophet, and was reſpected, and treated with kindneſs by my old lord. On his death bed he commended me to his ſon, and bade him conſider me rather as a friend than a ſlave. How well theſe injunctions have been obeyed my preſent ſituation evinces, and you may hence conclude what you may expect yourſelf.

Almara promiſed the utmoſt circumſpection, and ſoon after departed. He retired to his room, where he ſpent the remainder of the day. During the courſe of it he ſaw nothing of Halek, which was moſt agreeable; it ſpared him all danger of offending by recriminations, which, in the preſent ſtate of his mind, he could ill reſtrain. He waited with impatience the cloſe of day. At length the grateful ſhades appeared; the mountain tops no longer reflected the ſun's parting beam, every voice was ſtill, every ſound was huſhed. He faſtened the door of his chamber, and treading with the lighteſt ſteps, croſſed the gallery.

He had quitted his apartment only a few minutes, when he ſaw at the extremity of the gallery, and almoſt hid by a receſs, Halek. He was ſo intently obſerving ſomething he held in his hand, that he did not perceive Almara; who ſtepped with the utmoſt caution to an adjoining apartment; whence, after ſtaying a few minutes, he ventured to look out. Halek

was

was in the ſame ſpot. In one hand he held a dagger, in the other, a light; whoſe rays falling upon his harſh features, betrayed more than uſual ferocity. He darted from time to time his eye towards the apartment of Almara—then advanced ſlowly to it—eſſayed to open it, but could not.—He muttered indiſtinct curſes, and retired. Almara, who viewed this ſcene with horror, was for ſome time unable either to proceed, or to return to his apartment. His firſt impulſe was immediately to attempt his eſcape; and this he had certainly done, but for the ſtrong deſire of being certified as to the fate of his friend. To know this, and then to quit the palace, was his firm reſolution, as every evil was light in compariſon of being thus hourly expoſed to the vows and dagger of an aſſaſſin. So great was his indignation, that he forgot in it, for ſome time, every other feeling. But recollecting the motive which had impelled his ſearch, he was proceeding to the garden, when the ſound of diſtant foot-

ſteps obliged him to ſtop. He retired again to the apartment, and there waited till every thing was huſhed. With caution he then ventured forth, and at length reached the garden. He haſtened to the abode of Haſan, and was entering as uſual, when the ſound of voices ſtopped him. He recollected caution was neceſſary—he liſtened—and heard Halek ſpeaking in the moſt imperious terms, and denouncing the bittereſt threats if Haſan did not conſent to his ſcheme. What this ſcheme was, Almara could not diſtinguiſh, but he found the anger of Halek was rouſed by the refuſal of his ſlave. After a long and vehement altercation, carried on, on one ſide with the moſt cruel malignity, and on the other with unbending firmneſs, Halek returned to the palace, and Almara ventured to enter the abode of his friend. He found him much diſordered from the viſit of Halek, and the fear that Almara might enter, and diſcover himſelf: the purport of Halek's viſit was not diſcloſed. Almara related

ted the manner in which he had been prevented entering, and then aſked if the torch was ready?

Haſan anſwered it was; but ſaid, "on reflection, the ſcheme appeared to him ſo replete with danger, that he wiſhed it might be given up."

This Almara abſolutely refuſed; declaring his life was already ſo marked for deſtruction, no care could arreſt the blow; if to ſave his friend, he could employ the little time which ſeemed to remain to him, he ſhould rejoice in it; if not, though he would never ſue for favour to the caprice of a ſanguinary tyrant, he knew how to die.

"Do not," replied Haſan, "yield to this deſperation, and throw off all caution; you will only provoke the malice of Halek, and deſtroy not only yourſelf, but your friend."

Almara promiſed he would not, and Haſan then continued, "on entering the door I have mentioned, take care to cloſe it again, ſo that ſhould any one paſs, they

may make no discoveries. Should you, which I think is not probable, meet any one in the avenues to the cell, extinguish the light, and trust to any chance of release rather than suffer yourself to be detected."

Having received these precautions, and promised to attend to them, Almara departed, and soon reached the building. He had before examined it, and therefore, without difficulty, opened the door. A flight of stone-stairs led to the bottom; but these were so broken, and covered by rubbish, that he had the greatest difficulty every moment to prevent himself from falling, even whilst he closed the door. Having effected this, he descended slowly, and with much caution; but the damp, and unwholesome air made the torch burn so dimly, he could scarcely discern whither he was going. As soon as he had descended, he stopped to survey the place, and saw, to his infinite vexation, not as he expected a long line of vaults, but several winding passages, whose extremities were lost in darkness

darkneſs and diſtance. Deliberation which to chuſe was uſeleſs; chance might conduct aright, but he had no clue to guide him; not a ſound, but the echo of his own ſteps, paſſed on the ſtillneſs of night—He proceeded almoſt to the extremity of the paſſage, when he was ſuddenly ſtopped by the rattling of chains very near him—he ſtarted and endeavoured to follow the ſound—but it was not repeated, and though it had appeared ſo near, he was unable to diſcover from whence it proceeded.

To be thus diſappointed, when ſo near what he thought the completion of his wiſhes, mortified him moſt ſenſibly, and putting down his torch, with a feeling of deſpondence, he leant penſively againſt the wall. Preſently a loud groan directed him to a cell, whoſe door ſo exactly fitted a nich in the wall, that he had not perceived it. It was faſtened by a bolt on the outſide, on drawing it back, he perceived on the ground, pale, emaciated, laden with chains, and apparently inſenſible, his long-lamented friend. Overpowered with an-

guiſh at this ſight, not all the fortitude he had endeavoured to acquire, was able to ſupport him—he claſped his hands in an agony, and bedewed the livid face of his friend with unwonted tears. Roderic ſtill in the ſame poſture, heard him not—faint groans, at intervals, burſt from him, but theſe were the only ſigns of exiſtence. "I am come," ſaid Almara, in an agony not to be deſcribed, "only to ſee him die." In a few minutes, however, Roderic opened his eyes, and endeavouring to riſe, looked wildly around. At ſight of a torch, and a ſtranger, for ſuch Almara appeared to him, he ſeemed again loſt to recollection.

Fearing the effects of ſurprize and joy upon one ſo ill calculated to bear any ſhock, Almara determined, if Roderic did not recogniſe him, to wait till another interview before he made himſelf known. Speaking therefore in a feigned voice, but in accents of the utmoſt kindneſs, he endeavoured to impart comfort by the aſſurance that he was a friend, and at length ſo far

far succeeded, that Roderic, in a voice of surprise, asked "who was solicitous for a wretch like himself?—a persecuted being abandoned by every hope."

"Say not so," cried Almara, who with difficulty restrained the effusions of his full heart; "I hope soon to convince you of the contrary, and that sunk as you are in misery, Providence, whose goodness never slumbers, has raised you a friend, whose heart is devoted to your service."

"Whoever you are," replied Roderic, who seemed revived by these assurances, "why are you come at this hour, when certain destruction awaits you? In a few minutes my tyrant will be here, and should he discover you, his cruelty will not be slow in devising for you exemplary punishment. One poor victim has already been sacrificed in my service—I entreat you to go now, and come another night at an earlier hour, if you possess the means of entering."

"No," said Almara, "I will not fly the monster I despise; I will await his ar-

rival, and let him know there is at leaſt one being who trembles not in his preſence. Oh be not ſo raſh!" cried Roderic, in an agony of terror, "prove yourſelf more truly my friend! Hark! here he comes—fly, if you would not ſee me expire with dread."

The ſound of diſtant foot-ſteps were now plainly heard; and Almara, more in compliance with the earneſt wiſh of his friend, than from any feelings of his own, ſeized his torch, and quitted the cell. He retraced the paſſages by which he had entered, and reached the ſtairs in ſafety—but before he ventured to open the door, he extinguiſhed the torch. He paſſed unſeen through the little temple, and haſtened to inform Haſan of his ſucceſs. The poor creature rejoiced at it, but requeſted Almara to loſe no time in reaching the palace, that he might be there before Halek quitted his priſoner. He did ſo; and reaching his apartment found every thing as he had left it, and again faſtening the door, threw himſelf upon his bed, where he ſoon fell into

into a profound ſleep. From this he did not awake till late the next day.

He had ſcarcely riſen when Halek knocked at his door, and begged to be admitted. He entered with a countenance of unuſual compoſure.

"I come", ſaid he, "to ſpeak to you concerning your return to Spain: which you ſtill ſeem ſo earneſtly to deſire; and though I acknowledge I ſhould have felt more gratified if my kindneſs had won from you ſome regard, yet, as I promiſed you your liberty on the faith of a Muſſulman, I will not forego my word. In the courſe of a month, I ſhall myſelf return to Spain, where our victorious banners are diſplayed; I will take you with me, and you may return to your friends.

Almara, almoſt doubting whether he heard aright, regarded Halek with incredulous earneſtneſs. The conduct he had lately experienced had not been ſuch as to prepare him for this propoſal; and a dread of ſome concealed duplicity, clung pertinaciouſly to his mind. There was nothing

however in the appearance of Halek to juſtify ſuſpicion; his looks were tranquil, his manner compoſed, and Almara, after a ſhort pauſe, replied, "nothing could be ſo welcome to him as returning to his father, whoſe parental breaſt had, he was aſſured, been torn by the bittereſt anguiſh at his ſuppoſed death."

"Other parents," ſaid Halek gloomily, the ſmile which animated his features, ſucceeded by a look of indignation, "other parents have endured as much—parents, who ſighed not for ſons to return to a deſolate, and conquered country, but princes, who have loſt the ſole ſupport of their houſe, the prop of it's ancient honours." As he ſaid this he ſmote his breaſt, traverſed the apartment with an air of anguiſh, and exclaimed, "but I will be avenged!"—and opening the door with a ſort of frantic fury, daſhed it after him, and quitted the room.

"What," exclaimed Almara, "is to be expected from one who is the victim of his paſſions? his promiſes are fallacious, his

his good intentions deſtroyed almoſt as ſoon as conceived."

He threw himſelf on a couch, impreſſed by theſe feelings, when Halek re-entered. The fiery paſſions, with which he had quitted the room, were no longer viſible. He apologiſed for his late conduct by ſaying, "That ſuch was the bitterneſs of his feelings, when the fate of his ſon was reverted to, he could never command his anguiſh."

Almara, whoſe boſom retained not anger, and whoſe heart ſympathized with every one in affliction, readily admitted the apology, and with a ſatisfaction which glowed on every feature, heard Halek repeat his intention of returning to Spain. Though his doubts were by no means expelled, they were lulled, and he inſenſibly yielded to the ſweet idea of reviſiting his country, being preſſed to the boſom of his revered parent, and again exerting himſelf in that cauſe, which was the cheriſhed object of his warmeſt deſires.

They converſed for ſome time, and Ha-

lek preſerved ſuch an appearance of kindneſs, that had Almara had any other than incontrovertible proofs, he would have doubted every intention of premeditated evil.

Open, unſuſpicious, and generous himſelf, it was with difficulty he was induced to think ill of another, and nothing leſs than repeated violations of every tie of honour, could have made him harbour the ſuſpicions he felt.

In the preſent inſtance, however, if he did not give full credit for any diſintereſted motives, neither did he doubt that Halek meant really to return to Spain; and in this belief, his ſpirits were inſenſibly exhilirated, and his heart lightened of half its ſorrows. The idea of the happineſs he ſhould impart to his father, dwelt on his imagination in glowing colours, and but for his anxiety on account of Roderic, this ideal felicity would have been complete.

And was it not poſſible that Roderic could accompany them?—Oh no—it was not

not—a moment's reflection sufficed to convince him of the fallacy of such an idea.

If he doubted Halek's sincerity towards himself, if there were moments in which he feared this pretended kindness would end in some new duplicity, what must he dread for Roderic, towards whom he had already witnessed such unmitigable cruelty? whatever was done for *him*, must be effected without the knowledge of his tyrant.

At length the hour of visiting him arrived; and with the same precautions as before, Almara descended to the vault. Roderic expected him, though apparently without a suspicion who he was. Their last interview had indeed been too short, and on the part of Roderic too full of apprehension, to allow time for any discoveries. He seemed now not wholly divested of fear from the same cause, and said that Halek was so suspicious and vindictive, it was almost impossible to escape his vigilance or his cruelty.

"And

" And can it be really poſſible," ſaid Almara, after ſome minutes ſilence, " that you do not know me? Have ten or twelve months, made ſo great an alteration.

Roderic ſtarted as from a dream at the ſound of Almara's voice, and precipitately riſing, would have flown into his arms, but he was too feeble, and too much ſhackled by his unmerited fetters. He groaned, he ſobbed with agony, and then exclaimed, " Oh Almara! is it really you? what, what has brought you to this abode of miſery?

After the firſt emotions of ſurprize, and the firſt expreſſions of mutual condolence, Almara gave an account of all that had happened to him, ſince he became the priſoner of Halek; and in return learned from Roderic, that he had been made a priſoner by ſome of the tyrant's followers, who carried him to their lord, informing him they had ſecured the perſon who had wounded his ſon. All that rage or revenge could ſuggeſt was inflicted on the unhappy

unhappy priſoner; he was loaded with chains, and ſhortly after ſent into Syria, with ſome of the vaſſals of Halek; who were commanded to be careful of their charge. They were but too faithful to the orders of their lord; and Roderic marched, loaded with chains, from the ſea-coaſt, to the palace; ſcorched by a meridian ſun, and enduring all the inſolent taunts of newly-acquired authority. On his arrival, he was immediately conducted to a cell, where he remained ſeveral months, during which time he found amongſt his guards, one who compaſſionated his deplorable fate, and whoſe kindneſs much ſoftened it. He promiſed to aid his eſcape, when the unexpected return of Halek threw a gloom upon every hope. The day after his arrival, he viſited Roderic, and loading him with the bittereſt reproaches, declared that the ſuffering of his ſon ſhould be amply atoned, and that he, who had dared to lift his arm againſt a child of the Prophet, ſhould weep for it in life, and ſuffer its puniſhment even after

after death. "Too long," said he, "has my vengeance slumbered; but miscreant as thou art, I will teach thee what it is to lift thy arm against the sole prop of the house of Ommijah; I will not indulge thee with instant death; lingering torments shall consume thee, and when my vengeance is satisfied, thou shalt die.

Roderic was soon after removed to a cell, beneath one of the apartments of Halek; by whom he was constantly visited, and from whom he endured such increasing misery, that his spirits, always weak, and his resolution feeble, he prayed hourly for that death, which alone could emancipate him from suffering. The slave, who had promised to befriend him, had not for some time been suffered to attend him, and which ever way he turned, the prospect appeared so gloomy, that he wished only to close his eyes in eternity. At length his miserable fare was brought by Mirwin, his kind attendant.

He could scarcely restrain his joy, till informed by signs, Halek was within hearing.

The

The next day Mirwin came again; who at length ſo conſtantly attended him, that they ventured to converſe as formerly, and to revolve again their plan of eſcape. They were converſing on this ſubject one evening, when in the midſt of their diſcourſe, Halek burſt upon them — his features convulſed by rage, and his dagger in his hand.

"Is it thus, miſcreant," ſaid he, ſeizing Mirwin, "thou performeſt the commands of thy maſter? is it thus thou treateſt a murderer, and an unbeliever? monſter of ingratitude, pay for thy crimes!" So ſaying, he plunged his dagger in the heart of Mirwin, who fell lifeleſs on the floor.

Rouzed by this ſight from the ſtupor into which terror and ſurprize had thrown him, and careleſs of what became of himſelf, Roderic ſtarted up, and encumbered as he was by chains, ſeized the arm of his tyrant, and wreſted from him the bloody dagger.

Halek, as puſillanimous as cruel, called aloud for aſſiſtance, and ſeveral of his attendants

tendants ruſhed into the cell. Roderic was ſoon overpowered and obliged to relinquiſh the vengeance he had meditated. The body of the ill-fated Merwin, was, by order of Halek, left in the ſpot where it had fallen: the door of the priſon was again cloſed, and Roderic remained till the next evening with the corpſe of his friend lying at his feet. In the bitterneſs of ſorrow he murmured againſt that providence, on whom he ought to have relied; and with fruitleſs rage endeavoured to end a being which ſeemed preſerved only for greater miſery.

At the uſual hour he was viſited by Halek, accompanied by one of his ſlaves, whoſe cruelty Roderic had often experienced. He was dragged to the cell in which Almara found him, where he had ſince languiſhed in almoſt every miſery which human nature could endure. "Your appearance laſt night," continued he, "though at firſt I was apprehenſive of your being diſcovered, I afterwards thought ſome ſcheme of Halek's to deceive me; thoguh

though why, when I was so wholly in his power, I could hardly tell. You have now convinced me I have one friend, and that we ought never to despair of the assistance of providence, whilst no guilt has made us unworthy its protection."

Here Roderic ceased; and Almara, after deploring his sufferings, suggested several schemes for his release; when the distant sound of footsteps alarmed them. As it was of the utmost consequence to conceal from Halek their present intercourse, Almara retreated precipitately, and gained the palace undiscovered. The next morning he visited Hasan, who was much better, and able to crawl about. He communicated to him his hopes in regard to his friend, and his belief that he should be able to effect his escape. Hasan represented this as impossible, and advised endeavouring to soften the tyrant by concessions.

"No," said Almara, with scorn, "to that I will never submit; could I basely stoop to one I despise, I am convinced every endeavour would only make more sanguinary a nature, as cowardly as cruel.

Hasan

Husan replied, "the means he recommended might not be successful, but they were certainly less desperate than any other." He then added, "I have before advised you to be cautious; I believe Halek suspects you know of your friend's imprisonment; do not flatter yourself because his anger is suppressed, it will die away unsatiated. I have had many year's experience of his vindictive spirit, and I know that no one offends him, but to make bitter atonement.

"Even supposing it probable that your friend should escape from him, how would he get to Spain? You know the hatred nurtured against your countrymen by the followers of Mahomet; and much more probable is it that he should perish from want, or be seized by the officers of justice, than that he should ever rejoin his friends."

The truth of this suggestion it was impossible to controvert; indeed it had often occurred to Almara, when a similar plan for himself had occupied his mind. — But something

ſomething muſt be attempted — and in ſuch circumſtances, the means of relief muſt be deſperate. The power of Halek, however abuſed, it was hardly poſſible to oppoſe; his cruelty, however deprecated, it were madneſs to defy; though, therefore, the prudence of Haſan appeared too much tempered by caution, it was not to be wholly deſpiſed. They parted, without determining on any plan which might ſafely be adopted. Almara was obliged to paſs the remainder of the day with Halek, and when relieved from the irkſomeneſs of his preſence, and the ſhades of night gave ſecurity to his purpoſe, he ſilently quitted his chamber to viſit his friend. He ſtopped at the cottage; but what was his ſurprize to find it empty, and no trace remaining of his friend! a thouſand unpleaſant ſenſations ruſhed in a moment upon his mind; was it poſſible he had been betrayed by the man in whom he had confided? or had Halek watched him! Conjecture bewildered, but could not relieve him.

He

He hesitated for a few minutes, what was best to do; but loosing all personal fears, in the wish of succouring his friend, he resolved, whatever the consequence, to try and reach his cell. "Perhaps," said he, (his bosom beating with unwonted trepidation,) "perhaps Roderic is again the victim. — His meek forbearing spirit, cannot long support persecution. I shall see him die — lose him at the very moment, when I hoped his deliverance." He quitted the spot and with hasty steps proceeded to the temple. With some difficulty he opened the door; and as from that issued the only light he could receive, he resolved, whatever the consequence, to leave it open. He descended the stairs with his usual caution; — the numerous passages again bewildered him, but he endeavoured to follow that which he knew led to the cell of his friend. He thought he had chosen the right; but after wandering some time, he was convinced he had not — He listened, in hopes some sound might guide him, but all was profoundly silent — he stood

irresolute

irreſolute which way to proceed, and then reſolved to go back to the ſtairs, and thence explore a different route.

As it was neceſſary to uſe the utmoſt caution leſt he ſhould ſtill more bewilder himſelf, he proceeded ſlowly — as he paſſed his hand along the wall, in order to avoid the numerous windings, which had already deceived him, he laid it on ſomething which appeared like a door — he puſhed againſt it — it gave way — the harſh creaking of its hinges, ſounded in long echoes through the vaults; and as they diſturbed the univerſal ſtillneſs, he thought it impoſſible but they muſt be heard in the palace. Diſcovery ſeemed inevitable — he had however, proceeded too far to recede; and his preſent ſtate of uncertainty and ſuſpenſe was not to be borne. In a few moments every ſound died away, he determined to enter the cell, though it did not appear that of Roderic. He proceeded — but not aware of ſeveral ſteps which deſcended to the floor, he fell down them with great violence. He was for ſome

minutes ſtunned by the fall — but at length recovering, he extended his arms to aſſiſt his riſing — inſtantaneouſly he drew them back — a convulſive ſcream burſt from him, and ſudden horror ſeemed to congeal every vein. He had laid his hands on the cold face of ſome one extended at the bottom of the cell — he no longer needed aſſiſtance to riſe — Horror-ſtricken and convulſed, he doubted not but it was the corpſe of his wretched friend — He was flying in the firſt impulſe of deſpair to demand atonement of his murderer, when a faint groan ſtopped him. "Oh!" cried he, "he yet lives, if aſſiſtance is procured, he will yet recover." "No—no" was anſwered by a voice ſo feeble, that nothing but the ſtillneſs, which no other ſound diſturbed, could have made it audible. Convinced that it was indeed Roderic, he knelt beſide him, and in accents of the tendereſt commiſeration aſked the cauſe of what he witneſſed?

"It is a long, and dreadful ſtory," replied Roderic, in a hollow voice, and interrupted by convulſive ſtarts, "I have not breath

breath to tell it — worn out by the cruelty of Halek, — when he taunted and threatened me, I ſnatched his dagger, and plunged it in my boſom."

"Oh! horror — oh! miſery not to be borne," exclaimed Almara, "at the very moment, when I hoped your deliverance." He wrung his hands, and kneeling beſide Roderic, endeavoured to ſupport his head, which had no other pillow than the damp floor of the cell.

"Lament me not," ſaid Roderic, in a voice ſtill more feeble, "I have not your reſolution — I die the victim of a leſs manly ſpirit. Since morning I have lingered in torments — oh! in torments ſo dreadful! yet death comes not to my prayer — and when it does come, may I not be arraigned in another world for the daring impiety which has hurried me from this? Oh!—"

In vain Almara endeavoured to conſole him; bodily anguiſh, the horror of ſuicide, the belief that had he exerted more fortitude, he might yet have triumphed over all his calamities, tortured his mind,

and gave a double ſting to the ſtroke of death.

Almara, indifferent to every thing, but the hope of ſuccouring him, would have flown to the palace, and demanded aſſiſtance, but Roderic would not ſuffer him. "Do not leave me," ſaid he, "ſupport me in this bitter moment! Oh! Almara! — had I — had I — followed — your example — Oh! —" Here he uttered a groan ſo dreadful, that it almoſt convulſed Almara, and in a few minutes convinced him that all was over. The agony of his mind at this certainty exceeded all he had ever before experienced. For himſelf, he knew how to ſuffer, but he knew not how to behold the anguiſh of another. His indignation, his horror againſt Halek, every moment increaſed. "Monſter of barbarity!" cried he, "to leave the victim whom thy cruelty had driven to deſperation, to periſh in unſolaced miſery! even while life lingered in its laſt pulſation, to drag him to a ſpot ſo loathſome, and haſten, by added cruelty, the ſtroke of death."

death." An inſtantaneous reſolution to eſcape ſeized him; "no barbarians, no ſavage of the foreſt," ſaid he, "can be ſo ſanguinary as Halek." He threw himſelf beſide the corpſe of his friend; and, taking a ſad and laſt adieu, ruſhed from the cell.

Agonized by the ſcene he had witneſſed, and bewildered by the darkneſs which reigned around, he proceeded almoſt inſtinctively forward. Chance, however, directed his ſteps aright, he aſcended the ſtairs, and reached the temple in ſafety.

Revived by the purer air he now breathed, he haſtened onwards with a celerity which ſeemed to bid defiance to purſuit. He ſtopped not to form any plan, nor to weigh any conſequences — every difficulty which threatened him, every danger which unavoidably he muſt encounter, in an attempt ſeemingly ſo deſperate, as that of returning to Spain through a country, whoſe inhabitants had not only drawn againſt his nation the ſword of war, but the fiercer weapons of fanatic fury, could not appal him at this moment. Impoſſi-

bilities were forgotten, and danger deſpiſed. He was aſſured he could never have more to fear than from the monſter he had quitted; whom every motive of gratitude and honour, had he been capable of ſuch motives, would have induced to befriend him.

The night was dark and tempeſtuous; thick clouds, which had long been gathering, obſcured the heavens, and poured their foaming torrents in a deluge on the earth. The wind, as it ſwept acroſs the plain, murmured in diſmal howlings, and ſeemed to foretel approaching devaſtation. Almara in vain attempted to proceed —after many fruitleſs efforts, he was obliged to ſtop, and look for ſome ſhelter — none offered — but a grove at no great diſtance — thither he repaired, and crouched beneath the foliage, awaited the diſperſion of the ſtorm. The rain ſoon penetrated his cloaths, but he had been too long accuſtomed to hardſhips to ſink under thoſe which were merely perſonal. He kept himſelf as much ſheltered as he could, till

till the rage of the tempeſt was paſſed. At length the clouds diſperſed — the fury of the winds diminiſhed — though their melancholy ſighings ſtill murmured in the air. The moon appeared — the face of nature ſeemed changed — he renewed his journey; but the devious path he had purſued during the ſtorm, had led him from his original route. He looked around, and fancied he perceived, at a diſtance, the white towers of the palace. He haſtened from them as faſt as poſſible; but had not proceeded far, when a ſound of diſtant voices met his ear. He ſtopped a moment to liſten — he could diſtinguiſh nothing — a dread that his abſence might have been diſcovered quickened his pace, and he travelled with increaſed ſpeed. Some hours had now paſſed ſince he quitted the cell, and he was in hopes, before morning, to reach ſome place which might afford him ſecurity. He ſtopped a moment to conſider the country before him, over which the moon threw her pale beams. It was

an extenſive plain, with here and there a tuft of trees — but no veſtige of habitation. Whilſt he ſtood irreſolute, which way to proceed, the ſound of footſteps made him ſtart. He ruſhed onwards, but was inſtantly ſtopped by three men, whom he recognized as the ſlaves of Halek. Reſiſtance was vain,—his efforts, which were the laſt impulſe of deſpair, might have ſucceeded had he been oppoſed to equal numbers; but here they only provoked indignity; and he was forced back with taunts and threats. Leſs than an hour brought them to the palace, for Almara had, during his firſt attempts to proceed againſt the ſtorm, purſued ſo many different paths, that inſtead of proceeding, he had frequently retraced his ſteps. As he knew he ſhould be conducted to the preſence of his tyrant, he endeavoured to arm himſelf with fortitude to meet every evil, which might be deſtined for him. "It is but a little time," ſaid he, "that I can ſuffer — a happy eternity will diſpel every cloud — will

will re-unite me to my parents and friends, and give me to a country where the ſword of oppreſſion cannot deſolate, nor the rage of fanaticiſm find an entrance."

Whilſt Almara, ſupported by religion and ſtrengthened by fortitude, was preparing to meet calamity with firmneſs, Halek, a prey to every evil paſſion, ſat meditating vengeance in his ſplendid abode; and ſecretly murmuring that though his rank was ſo exalted, he was not exempt from the miſeries of humanity.

Halek was a deſcendant of the princely houſe of Ommijah; and the only ſurviving ſon of a doating parent. Four of his brothers had periſhed in the civil feuds, which ſo long deſolated the Moſlem empire. On him, therefore, was laviſhed all the fondneſs, which had before been divided with his murdered brothers. Every wiſh was gratified, every propenſity indulged. Surrounded by ſlaves and ſycophants, Halek ſoon diſcovered thoſe paſſions, which marked his future life.

Though his father had no wiſh but to

encreaſe his pleaſures, and did not even uſe that reſtraint which might have been ſo ſalutary, he looked with impatience to the period when all he now coveted ſhould be his own.

That period came too ſoon. Incapable of either affection or gratitude, he indulged himſelf in indecent revelry, even whilſt his father lay uninterred. No ſooner was he placed with his anceſtors at Mecca, than Halek determined to avail himſelf of the advantages his rank and riches afforded in the gratification of every ſenſual indulgence.

He plunged in exceſs, and ſoon became the willing ſlave of vice. Contrary to the laws of the Khoran, which he profeſſed to hold in high eſteem, he wore ſilk, kept dogs, drank wine, and neglected thoſe faſts, which the Prophet particularly enjoins. His ſlaves trembled in his preſence, and by the moſt abject compliance with all his wiſhes, contributed to his ruin. Yet they ſecured not to themſelves kinder treatment. The moſt trifling circumſtance was

ſufficient

ſufficient to inflame his irritable paſſions; and the victim of his wrath ſeldom eſcaped with life. Thus uncontrouled by others and unreſtrained by himſelf, his paſſions conducted him to the blackeſt crimes. He had exerciſed more than common cruelty on one of his ſlaves, who having at length found means to elude his power, complained to the Cadi. The upright magiſtrate, more ſwayed by a love of juſtice, than awed by the rank or riches of Halek, finding that his conduct had been moſt flagitious, proceeded with all the warmth of integrity to defend the injured party. Halek was ſoon apprized of the affair; he attempted, but in vain, to bribe the Cadi. He then haſtened to Damaſcus, and ſo contrived to repreſent the affair, that he was acquitted by a higher tribunal. His ſlave was ordered to return—but this he avoided, by eſcaping to the frontiers, prefering every evil to the dreaded vengeance of his lord.

Halek, who had thus iniquitouſly triumphed over the helpleſſneſs he ought to

have protected, became more daring in his conduct. At length reports reached the throne, which made the Caliph suspect he had been deceived; but Halek, no less crafty than base, finding more was known of his character than he wished, secured the favour of his sovereign by a well-timed offer of passing into Spain with a numerous train of vassals. His four sons accompanied him; among whom one was the idol of all his affections. This one fell in the first encounter, two others shared his fate; and Halek, in the bitterness of his sorrow, cursed the moment, when, to give an appearance of loyalty, he did not feel he had thus destroyed the hopes of his family. He would have returned to Syria with the son who was yet spared, but permission could not be obtained. His resentment at this was uncontrouled: but he dared not disobey the orders of the commander of the faithful. The battle of Eciga soon followed; Almara and Roderic encountered the young Halek, and wounded him dangerously. From that moment

moment the vindictive ſpirit of the father breathed nothing but vengeance; and could he with one blow have exterminated a nation, which had proved ſo fatal to his race, he would with joy have done it. Though ſeverely wounded, his ſon was not dead; and he now inſiſted upon his returning to Syria; the wiſhes of the young man ſeconded this deſire; but Muſa, under whoſe banners he had fought, and who added to a pique againſt Halek, which made him glad of an opportunity of mortifying him, the pride of having his train compoſed of the flower of the Arabian nobility, would not accede to the father's wiſhes. The refuſal was moſt fatal.—The young prince was ſaid to have fallen in endeavouring to eſcape the purſuit of the Spaniards. This information, which had been conveyed to Halek ſoon after his return to Syria, had completed his domeſtic affliction. The natural gloom of his temper encreaſed; his former hatred of the Spaniards was augmented; and in ſchemes of the moſt ſanguinary vengeance he endeavoured to ſoothe

the torments of his mind. The gratification of thoſe ſentiments was but too probable, when he held in his hands the men who had ſpilt the blood of his only ſon. His treatment of Roderic has been before related, and that he did not execute immediate vengeance on Almara was, perhaps, owing to ſeveral cauſes. It was known not only to his vaſſals, but to the Caliph, whoſe good opinion he wiſhed to ſecure, that he owed his life to Almara—toviolate, therefore, ſo groſsly the rights of hoſpitality and gratitude, was what he feared to do. There was alſo ſomething in the honeſt intrepidity of the young Spaniard, which awed even him; and after being informed of his ſon's fate, though his deſire of vengeance became greater, a ſecret fear made him prefer the bowl, or the dagger, to thoſe more open means which hitherto he had not ſcrupled to uſe. He had by means of a ſlave, whom he had ordered to watch Almara, diſcovered his nightly viſits to the cell, and from that moment his doom was fixed. Halek meditated a vengeance he thought

thought worthy the provocation he had received; and with a refinement in barbarity, of which the human mind seems incapable, determined first to dispatch Roderic, that nothing might remain as a solace to his friend. With this intention he went to his cell, — but a spirit, worn out by continued suffering, induced Roderic to be his own executioner. The footsteps of Almara were too vigilantly watched to make his escape possible; and though during the storm, his pursuers had yielded to the terrors it excited, and had returned for security to the palace, they were soon obliged to resume their pursuit, and threatened with the severest chastisement if they did not bring back their victim.

Almara was instantly conducted to his presence, when ordering the slaves to retire, he no longer even endeavoured to suppress his rage. He loaded Almara with the vilest reproaches, and threatened him with the most exemplary vengeance; but instead of the terrors he expected to excite, and the pity which he doubted not

would be implored, Almara regarded him with the coldeſt contempt, and anſwered, "To you who are ſo familiar with crimes, perfidy and murder have no horrors. Do, therefore, your worſt. I have a mind untainted by reproach, and ſhrink not from that death, with which you have ſo often threatened me—to effect which you infuſed poiſon into the liquor I was to drink, and endeavoured to break open my door in the ſilent ſecurity of night—I have long ceaſed to expect from you any thing but evil—from hands ſo often polluted with blood good can never come, and in regard to my fate, your malice can invent nothing for which I am not prepared."

"You talk boldly," ſaid Halek, his countenance red with fiery paſſions, "we ſhall ſoon ſee how you can act."

Almara in proud indignation made no anſwer; but looking intrepidly on his perſecutor, awaited the blow which ſhould releaſe him from ſuffering. To releaſe him, however, by death, was not the immediate

intention

intention of Halek. He ſtamped with his foot—four of his ſlaves appeared. "Convey this traitor to the cell I before mentioned."

They ſeized Almara in ſilence, and after conducting him through ſeveral ſubterraneous paſſages, opened the door of a cell, whoſe gloomy walls were lighted by one feeble lamp. In a corner lay the miſerable remains of a bed, which was all the furniture of the place. The doors were immediately cloſed upon him, and he doubted not but the ſame ſcene was to be acted towards him which had already terminated the ſufferings of Roderic. To bear them with fortitude, and to mitigate them by patience was, however, his firm reſolve; and in humble ſubmiſſion to that Being who ſometimes permits the wicked to triumph, for ends we are not able to penetrate, he bore unmurmuring his hard deſtiny. "The bitterneſs of diſappointment," ſaid he, "is over. Providence has not hitherto crowned my endeavours, but

but he will aſſiſt me, when his aſſiſtance will be moſt beneficial."

During two melancholy years, theſe reſolutions were daily tried; but they were not ſhaken, they ſupported him in ſolitude, in deprivations of every kind. At the end of this period he was one morning ſurprized by the entrance of Halek; whom he had not beheld ſince his confinement. He was much altered — ſickneſs and ſorrow had, apparently aſſailed him. "Follow me," ſaid he, to Almara.

Almara obeyed with difficulty. The damp cell he had ſo long inhabited had taken from his limbs their vigour; and the total darkneſs to which his eyes had been accuſtomed, made the ſtrong light of day too much for their feeble powers. He followed to the apartments of the palace; in one of the moſt ſplendid lay a youth, apparently in the agonies of death. For ſome minutes after their entrance, he ſeemed inſenſible to every thing but the anguiſh

anguiſh of ſuffering. At length he was addreſſed by Halek, who ſaid to him, "Now, my beloved ſon, revive! Here is the captive whom you claim; he is wholly and entirely yours: diſpoſe of him as you will." A faint ſmile paſſed over the features of the youth, and he made an effort to ſpeak; but 'ere he could articulate the words, they died upon his tongue. Convulſions agitated his whole frame, and the laſt ſtruggle of nature ſeemed approaching. Halek, with frantic agony, obſerved theſe ſymptoms — he ſunk on the floor, groaned, raved, rent his turban, and acted all the fury of a madman. The attendants dared not approach him, nor were they ſufficiently intereſted by his ſufferings to wiſh to alleviate them. His cruelty and wickedneſs had made him an object of general abhorrence; and ſo far from exciting any commiſeration, his grief ſeemed rather to afford them triumph, in the conſciouſneſs that he at length endured thoſe pangs he had ſo often inflicted.

Not

Not ſo Almara—ever kind and compaſſionate, no reſentment could exclude from his boſom the dictates of humanity. He was informed that this was the only ſon of Halek, who had ſo long been mourned as dead. He had only lately returned from Spain, where he had been made a priſoner, and treated with the utmoſt humanity. In recompence of this he had promiſed to liberate, as far as his power extended, all chriſtian ſlaves; and his firſt requeſt to his father was the releaſe of ſuch as he poſſeſſed. Halek replied he had only one, who had deſerved ſo ill at his hands, that he ſhould never quit the walls of his priſon. This anſwer afflicted the young man; he ſtill continued importunate, and made ſeveral attempts to ſee the captive: in this he was defeated by the watchful ſuſpicions of his father, who no ſooner learned the name of the Spaniard to whom he owed his preſervation, than he was doubly ſolicitous Almara ſhould never more be ſeen or heard of. What muſt have been the ſelf-upbraiding of the guilty Halek, when he learned that

that the man who to his ſon had been kindred, country, and every tie, was father of him he had ſo baſely injured. A ſenſe of ſhame, which repeated crimes had not quite extinguiſhed, induced him to conceal for ever from his ſon the cruelties of which he had been guilty. He gave the ſtricteſt orders to ſuch of his ſlaves as ſtill knew of the exiſtence of Almara, never to mention his name on pain of the ſevereſt chaſtiſement; and in the mean time endeavoured to convince his ſon, the captive for whom he was ſo ſolicitous, was not deſerving his care. This anſwer did not ſatisfy the honour which was plighted, and the performance of his promiſe was the firſt wiſh of the young Halek. He had not been long returned to the paternal roof, when he was ſeized with an epidemic fever, whoſe mortal ſymptoms ſoon baffled the ſkill of the phyſicians. This was no ſooner known to Halek than he became almoſt frantic. To preſerve a life ſo dear was his only wiſh, and the ſubject of his unceaſing prayers.

The

The youth, who, though ſurrounded by the ſhades of death, was ſtill ſenſible, again applied for the releaſe of the captive, declaring that he could not die in peace with his promiſe ſo ill performed. His father now could refuſe him nothing—and Almara appeared. He ſeemed, however, to be free too late to afford pleaſure—the dying youth faintly ſmiled, then claſped his hands on his breaſt, and calling on the prophet whom he had been taught to adore, ſealed his eyes in long oblivion.

The frantic parent, who had been a few minutes before dragged out of the room, was no ſooner informed of the event, than, in a tone which no one about him was accuſtomed to diſobey, he ordered his attendants to leave him, and returning to the chamber of death, gave way to the moſt violent paroxyſms of grief. He called on his dead ſon, implored him to return to life;—then curſed his own miſerable fate, and queſtioned the juſtice of the holy Prophet, who thus ſuffered his ſervant to be humbled in the duſt.

At

At length, exhauſted by his efforts, he ſunk on the floor, and there lay many hours. He was then conveyed to his bed, and it was not long before he diſcovered ſymptoms of that diſorder which had deprived him of his ſon. Every limb was racked with torture, yet he retained his ſenſes—retained them to ſee himſelf deſerted by thoſe over whom he had ſo deſpotically ruled. Almara alone, Almara, whom ſo cruelly he had treated, could be induced to give him any ſuccour; but Halek on a bed of ſickneſs, tortured by ſuffering and ſorrow, was no longer that Halek from whom he had endured ſo much.

Halek, in the mean time, now firſt learnt that rank and riches are no ſecurity to their poſſeſſor againſt the approaches of diſeaſe and death; and that they are as impotent to cool the burning heat of a fever, as to ſtill the reproaches of a wounded conſcience. His conſcience was indeed loaded with crimes.—When he looked back on a long ſeries of years, not one action could he call to remembrance to ſhed a ray of comfort

comfort over his darkened proſpects. In idea he ſaw the pale images of the victims whom, either from the impulſe of paſſion or the dictates of revenge, he had ſent to an untimely grave.—The father whom he had torn from the boſom of his family,—the child whom he had ſnatched from the hopes of its parents,—the widow whom he had borne down by oppreſſion,—the helpleſs orphan from whom he had wreſted its little right.—The anguiſh of his mind encreaſed his fever, and he was ſoon reduced to the verge of the grave.

Contrary, however, to every expectation, after having lingered many days in the extremeſt torture, his diſorder took a favourable turn—and his recovery was pronounced as a certainty. A ſhort time confirmed this opinion—but though his health was re-eſtabliſhed, he loſt the uſe of his limbs, nor could any art of medicine ever reſtore it. He now ſaw himſelf in declining life, robbed of the only beings he ever loved; reduced to a miſerable dependence upon thoſe to whom his former tyranny

had

had made him deteſtable; who, now availing themſelves of his forlorn ſituation, frequently ſuffered him, in the midſt of his ſplendid palace, to want the common neceſſaries of life.

Thus abandoned by the world, a prey to the bittereſt remorſe, he dragged on for many years a miſerable life.

Almara, who attended him during the criſis of his fever, no ſooner ſaw him in a convaleſcent ſtate than he prepared to return to Spain. Halek attempted not to oppoſe him, but even furniſhed him with the means of defraying his expences.

During the period that Halek ſeemed at the point of death Almara, who had been informed by a ſlave that Haſan was confined in ſome of the ſubterraneous cells, procured the keys, and in one of them found him, chained to the ground, and in a ſtate of the moſt deſolate miſery. He no ſooner ſaw Almara than his raptures were unbounded, and Almara, on his part, experienced the moſt heartfelt pleaſure.

After the firſt congratulations were over, Almara aſked the particulars of all that had

paſſed. He was told that Halek, having diſcovered by whoſe means acceſs had been gained to the cell of Roderic, had ſecretly ſeized Haſan, and conducted him to the priſon where he had ever ſince lingered. "Never," ſaid he, "did I expect to ſee you again; as I concluded our inſatiable tyrant would not ſpare a being whom he ſeemed to perſecute with ſo much rancour."

Almara, looſening his chains, conducted him from the gloomy cell, and once more gladdened his eyes with the chearing light of day.

Not even the deplorable ſtate of Halek ſeemed to Haſan a ſecurity againſt future perſecutions, and he preferred every difficulty and danger to the poſſibility of being again a priſoner. He took an affectionate leave of Almara, and the next morning proceeded to ſeek ſome of his relations, who lived at Medina.

With the utmoſt impatience Almara prepared to quit an abode which to him had been a ſcene of ſuch miſery. A ſigh of regret

gret eſcaped his boſom for his departed friend, whoſe preſence would have gilded with brighter beams his dawning hopes.

He arrived ſafe on the coaſt of Spain, and haſtened to the mountains of Aſturia, where report informed him the few Spaniards who were faithful to the deſolate fortune of their county ſtill remained. The ſtandard of Pelagius was unfurled, and his public and private virtues made him an object of reſpect and love.

Almara did not long ſeek his father in vain; he found him devoted to his king and country. So unexpected, and ſo joyful a return of a ſon he had long mourned as dead, was almoſt too much for his enfeebled frame. Scarcely could he perſuade himſelf of the reality of what he ſaw, and ſcarcely would he permit this beloved ſon to be a moment abſent from him, leſt ſome new evil ſhould ſeparate them.

The dutiful and virtuous Almara had no wiſh to quit him, but during the remainder of his life conſtituted his ſole earthly felicity. His merit, his long captivity, and martial

fame, recommended him to the notice of Pelagius, who was a lover and rewarder of merit wherever he found it. Happy to discover it united with rank, he conferred on Almara the higheſt dignities, and took him to his confidence. In the continued exerciſe of his duty, the life of Almara glided tranquilly away; and when, by the diſordered ſtate of his country, he was again called to the field, he forgot not, in the ardour of patriotiſm, the duties of humanity; nor ever ſtained the ſword of the conqueror with the blood of private malice.

Beloved, honoured, and reſpected, he lived in a turbulent age to reflect luſtre on his country and himſelf; and when, at length, he ſunk into the lap of years, and an honourable grave received him, his name was remembered with the utmoſt reſpect, and his example held up as worthy the imitation of a grateful poſterity.

THE END.

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